Landscapes of Defence in Early Medieval Europe

Landscapes of Defence in Early Medieval Europe

Edited by

John Baker, Stuart Brookes,
and Andrew Reynolds

BREPOLS

MARC FITCH FUND

© 2013, Brepols Publishers n.v., Turnhout, Belgium

Dedicated to

Sam, Jerry, Evie, and Ted

Contents

Illustrations

Tables

Landscapes of Defence
in Early Medieval Europe

This collection of papers results from a conference held at University College London in 2007 which sought to assess the scale and form of civil defences built in Europe during the early medieval period, *c*. 800–1000. Most previous work on the reactions of these societies to external threats has focused on individual sites or specific categories of evidence. These papers offer a range of new perspectives driven by a landscape approach. Several focus on the civil defences adopted in England around the time of King Alfred the Great, thereby setting a new agenda for the study of Anglo-Saxon military landscapes. Other papers outline a series of European case-studies facilitating a comparative approach, not only of local and regional defensive structures, but also of interpretive paradigms. Topics and themes covered include multidisciplinary approaches to the study of civil defence landscapes, the organization and form of defensive structures, and the relationships and dynamics between social structure, social complexity, militarization, and external threats. With examples ranging from England to Spain, Germany, and Scandinavia, the book is of relevance to a range of disciplines including archaeology, history, onomastics, geography, and anthropology.

Acknowledgements

Preface

This book is the result of a conference (with three additional commissioned essays by Andrew Agate, by Neil Christie, Oliver Creighton, and Matt Edgeworth, and by Letty ten Harkel) which was held two-thirds of the way through a three-year project (*Beyond the Burghal Hidage*) funded by the Leverhulme Trust, investigating civil defensive networks in Viking Age England. The event was held at the UCL Institute of Archaeology on 9–10 November 2007 and was supported by a generous grant from the British Academy. Its main purpose was to bring additional perspectives, both methodological and geographical, to bear on the Leverhulme project to help inform and contextualize the research through the comparative study of other European early medieval states.

The volume will be of interest to scholars and students working on the early medieval period throughout Europe, and, importantly, it will provide a bridge between those working on northern and southern Europe. The essays are inter-disciplinary in nature and thus the book is not limited to a particular scholarly field. The contents will be of relevance to archaeologists, historians, place-name scholars, and historical geographers, among other allied fields. The essays collected here were written between late 2007 and 2010, when the volume was sent for publication. Unfortunately, the lengthy delay between completion and publication is reflected in certain bibliographical omissions. Where forthcoming works known to the authors prior to submission have now appeared in print, we have endeavoured to update the publication details; but authors have not been able to incorporate references to other works published since 2010.

The first three essays in the volume (Reynolds, Brookes, and Baker), provide the rationale behind the Leverhulme project, namely a scholarly desire to move beyond the strongholds listed in the document known as the Burghal Hidage to consider the full range of evidence for civil defence available from a landscape

and place-name perspective. The following essays include: an important reassessment of fortified sites as presented in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Yorke); the evidence of coinage in relation to strongholds (Williams); the role, pace, and impact of suburban development around major strongholds (Agate); and a detailed recent study of the key site of Wallingford (Christie, with Creighton and Edgeworth). A further essay considers the social and political ramifications of civil defence and social organization in the late Anglo-Saxon period (Abels). These first essays represent a fundamental shift in method, approach, and focus with regard to the study of Anglo-Saxon civil defence.

The second part of the book comprises a series of studies focused on regions of Continental Europe and thus provides an important parallel. Each contribution examines insular scholarly traditions and sets out new evidence alongside reappraisal of existing material. Comparative work between Anglo-Saxon fortifications and their European counterparts is very limited. That which has been done is largely concerned with attempting to place anomalous English fortifications within a Scandinavian milieu. Several essays collected here attempt to redress this imbalance. One essay presents material from the Carolingian Low Countries (Ten Harkel); another examines the evidence from the cultural ecotone between the Frankish and Slavonic worlds (Ettel); while Spanish material of the period, largely unknown in northern European scholarship, is presented in the form of a detailed regional survey and an overview (Escalona; Quirós Castillo). Although Scandinavian material is better known by English readers, a further essay presents the results of an important recent research project in Sweden (Hedenstierna-Jonson, Holmquist, and Olausson).

The conference was ably chaired by Nicholas Brooks and Stefan Brink, who are thanked for their contributions. We are also grateful to David Parsons, our colleague in the *Beyond the Burghal Hidage* project, who participated in the organization and running of the conference. Although he was unable to take part in the editorial process, he nevertheless advised and supported us at various stages of the compilation of this volume. The late David Hill gave the conference summary, and three other scholars gave essays at the conference that, for various reasons, are not published here (Dorn van Dommelen, Dries Tys, and Jonny De Meulemeester). Sadly, both David Hill and Jonny De Meulemeester passed away shortly after the conference, and their many contributions to early medieval studies are remembered here.

Archaeological Correlates for Anglo-Saxon Military Activity in Comparative Perspective

Andrew Reynolds*

The study of warfare in ancient societies has generated a substantial literature across a range of disciplines, including anthropology, archaeology, and history. Beyond military academies, conflict studies is now a field in its own right in many universities worldwide, a situation that underscores the significance of the conduct of warfare as a geo-social commonality.

This essay[1] draws on a series of case-studies to examine the range of archaeo-

Andrew Reynolds is Professor of Medieval Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

logical correlates for martial behaviour and, later in the period under consideration, state-level militarization in early medieval society, focusing on Anglo-Saxon England but with reference to cross-cultural and cross-chronological situations where useful. Overall, an attempt is made to concentrate on social explanations for military activity and its various forms and to provide a summary of the range and nature of 'military archaeology' in a specific context for the purposes of wider comparisons. A further aim is to set the military character of Anglo-Saxon England in the Viking Age into long-term perspective.

Introduction

While evidence for militarization is present in most societies over time, the form that it takes varies considerably according to a variety of factors. Social complexity, geographical scale, and socio-political context are three major aspects that influence the physicality of warfare in early medieval (and other) societies, and these themes form the basis for this essay, although it is important to bear in mind the usual caveats relating to the nature of the archaeological record, which include variations in preservation according to burial environment and of social customs affecting patterns of deposition.

As one of the most undesirable features of human behaviour, warfare continues to play a major role in socio-political competition. Its centrality and prominence in such a context is evident in the earliest written narratives known from the ancient world, such as the Mesopotamian Middle Bronze Age *Epic of Gilgamesh* and Homer's epics the *Odyssey* and the *Illiad* produced a millennium later in eighth-century BC Greece at the start of the period of classical antiquity. At once, such sources reveal a range of motivations for organized violence, including honour and pride, and conquest and defence.

The nature of the drivers behind organized aggression in human societies has been extensively discussed across the social science disciplines with little consensus. Although comparative anthropology reveals many different kinds of conflict between social groups, overarching causal explanations are hard to apply, and, while common elements can be observed both spatially and temporally, a contextual approach is crucial. (The specifically archaeological and anthropological literature need not be surveyed in general terms here as this has been done effectively by others: for a review of nineteenth- and twentieth-century thinking see Carman 1997 and Otterbein 2000; surveys of more recent work may be found in Otto, Thrane, and Vandkilde 2006 and Pollard and Banks 2007.) While the innateness, or otherwise, of humankind's propen-

sity to conduct warfare will surely continue to be debated without conclusion, militarization in many pre-industrial societies produces certain consistent patterns and processes that are revealed by a comparative approach, some of which are considered below in relation to early medieval situations.

Archaeology reveals human conflict in the past in many forms, although evidence for military activity can be observed in two basic modes: direct and indirect. The remains of fortified sites are found among the earliest societies to engage with monumental constructions, the eighth-millennium BC walled city of Jericho being perhaps the most prominent among early defensive structures, while the range of artefacts that might be considered as weapons is vast and often difficult to define given that many humanly fashioned implements and natural materials can be turned to violent purposes from normally peaceful, functional, or other applications. Ultimately, of course, violence does not require weapons at all. Material remains, both monumental and artefactual, represent direct evidence for militarized society, yet they do not (necessarily) explicitly indicate actual conflict. The archaeological record in the Ardennes in the tenth century AD, for example, reveals prehistoric and Roman sites refortified in the face of Magyar incursion, but the perceived threat never materialized (De Meulemeester and O'Conor 2007: 318); many comparable situations are known. In a further recognition of this issue, Brookes (this volume) also makes the distinction between archaeologies of conflict and 'militarism', the preparations made for conflict.

By contrast, human remains with injury patterns characteristic of hand-to-hand combat are not uncommon finds in many periods and places and often bear such traces as to be distinguishable from skeletal pathologies acquired through other forms of violence, such as murder and formal judicial execution (Wakely 1997; Reynolds 2009a: 34–52). Furthermore, artefacts related to premodern military activity, such as the mass of flint projectile points found at the Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Crickley Hill, Gloucestershire, and slingshots and ballista bolts from Maiden Castle, Dorset, in the late Iron Age/Roman contact phase, provide a further explicit archaeological outcome of military actions, although it has been argued that the fourteen individuals with skeletal evidence of violent injury (including one with an iron projectile embedded in the spine) from a cemetery by the western entrance to Maiden Castle need not have actually died at the hill-fort (Dixon 1979; Sharples 1991: 124–25). While over a hundred sites from Roman Britain have yielded lead slinghots (Greep 1987), they can be used in both military and non-military situations, while impact marks from slingshots and other larger projectiles form a secure body of evidence for actual military engagement. Following the lead

set in the United States by Richard Fox and others on the site of the Little Big Horn conflict of 1876, recent work by Glenn Foard on plough-soil finds of projectiles and dress fittings has overturned our understanding of the conduct of large-scale battles in England in the later medieval period and the English Civil War, providing an important demonstration of the value of unstratified surface finds (Fox and Scott 1991; Fox 1993; Foard 2009). Overall, a careful contextual approach is vital when considering the archaeology of conflict (Carman 1997: 19) to distinguish between archaeologies of intent and actuality.

With regard to the material culture of Anglo-Saxon martial activity, individual weapon types, such as arrow-heads, spears, swords, shields, and other categories of military gear, including equestrian equipment, have received detailed and scholarly treatment (Jessop 1996; Swanton 1973, Swanton 1974; Davidson 1962; Dickinson and Härke 1992; Fern 2007; Graham-Campbell 1992). Heinrich Härke has examined warrior culture in early Anglo-Saxon England in a series of influential essays, while the contexts of warfare in the same period have attracted numerous contributions within the framework of the 'migration' paradigm (Härke 1990, Härke 1992; Hines 1989). From the eighth century, following the cessation of the deposition of weapons in graves, manuscript illustrations, and sculpture increasingly provide a rich source of evidence for weapon use and typological development, while, for example, the late Anglo-Saxon poem *The Battle of Maldon* and the Bayeux Tapestry provide extraordinarily detailed renditions of military encounters, which have each generated a field of study in their own right (Ohlgren 1986; Scragg 1991; Wilson 1985; Lewis 2005). Iconographic evidence is beyond the remit of this essay and remains to be fully interrogated.

The locations of battles can sometimes be fixed on the basis of written and/or place-name evidence, but field remains (in the form of artefacts) of early medieval skirmishes leave more subtle traces, usually limited to dress and weapon fittings rather than mass finds of weapons, a characteristic of field remains associated with engagements of earlier and later periods (Reynolds 2005: 172). The extraordinary range of weapons, burials, and defensive works found at Kalkriese Hill, Osnabrück, Lower Saxony — the result of a crushing defeat inflicted on three Roman legions by Germanic tribes in AD 9 — are unmatched elsewhere (see, for example, Wells 2003). Finds of human remains from a range of early medieval English contexts, however, can be attributed to acts of war, again via careful contextual analyses, and these are considered further below.

Ritual depositions of weapons, often deliberately bent or broken (i.e. ritually 'killed' or destroyed) are known from many societies, not least early medi-

eval ones and particularly those of the late Iron Age and early medieval periods in the Scandinavian world (Fabech 2006; Geibig 1991). Although there are marked regional differences in patterns of deposition in the Viking homelands, for example with many more weapon finds in relation to the number of known burials from Norway than other Scandinavian regions, a large number of individual and massed weapon finds is known from watery places in Denmark (Pedersen 2008: 208–09). While less impressively attested in Anglo-Saxon England, there are many single weapon depositions in watery places and these are considered further in this essay. Such finds bring a social dimension to the practice of warfare beyond traditional materialist approaches to conflict, which, in many disciplines — including anthropology — emphasize logistics, strategy, and tactics, although these latter issues also have important, if not fundamental, implications for social interpretations, particularly of the nature of social organization (Ferguson 1984; Turney-High 1971; Haldon 2006; Halsall 1989).

With regard to the Anglo-Saxon period, evidence is drawn from various contexts and from different points in time to illustrate thematic discussion: no attempt is made to provide a seamless narrative but rather to engage with material remains relevant to a series of methodological and interpretive concerns. Overall, the aim is to set out the range and character of the archaeology of militarized activity in Anglo-Saxon England (and to a degree its neighbours) and to explore how the various forms identified match with certain broader conclusions revealed by comparative anthropology. In many ways, the aim just stated is rather bold, but necessary, not least to place early medieval warfare alongside better-studied periods and places. The matter is complicated not only by the sheer volume of literature relating specifically to conflict but also by the compartmentalized nature of the study of early medieval societies in Britain, which have long been divided by 'cultural' region (i.e. between 'Celtic' and 'Germanic') and by chronological subdivision (i.e. early *c.* 450–650, middle *c.* 650–850, and late *c.* 850–1100 Anglo-Saxon). Furthermore, thematic subdivisions in the field of medieval archaeology, and indeed medieval studies as a whole, do not engender holistic approaches to individual problems (Reynolds 2009b: 409–13). These situations leave modern scholarship without a detailed overview of early medieval warfare in Britain, although Guy Halsall's various contributions on Anglo-Saxon warfare have laid solid foundations (Halsall 1989; Halsall 2003). What follows, then, must be seen as a preliminary and selective overview rather than a comprehensive set piece.

Historically, evidence for warfare in Anglo-Saxon England has been studied disparately, with a particular focus on locating battle sites recorded in the principal grand narrative sources for the period, namely Bede's *Ecclesiastical*

History and the group of texts known collectively as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The thirty-three major fortifications listed in the document(s) known as the Burghal Hidage remain at the centre of debate regarding the Anglo-Saxon (specifically West Saxon) response to the Viking incursions of the later ninth century and the nature of the West Saxon conquest of midland England in the tenth century. Importantly, the sites described in the Burghal Hidage have played a fundamental role in exploring explicit points of contact (or otherwise) between text and physical remains in a military context (Brooks 1964; Hill 1969; Hill and Rumble 1996). Chronological and geographical patterns of hoarding in the Viking Age in Britain have also been related explicitly to documented movements of Scandinavian armies reported in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (see, for example, Brooks and Graham-Campbell 1986), with a clear relationship between the two forms of evidence, particularly during the later ninth century as neatly demonstrated initially by David Wilson (Wilson 1968) and then subsequently refined by James Graham-Campbell (Graham-Campbell 1989; Graham-Campbell 2004).

Further connections between the physical world and written evidence for warfare in Anglo-Saxon England can be made by investigating relationships between the actual topography of battle sites and idealized and imagined descriptions of conflict locations found in poetic and prose written sources which, despite their often fictional nature, nevertheless express a contemporary vision of the kinds of locales deemed appropriate for certain kinds of violent actions. Earlier textual exemplars can and did provide templates for later authors to emulate and manipulate, but, even in contexts such as these, it is fair to say that the imagery so conjured had contemporary relevance and application. Early medieval written sources, both in England and in Europe, provide a rich source of material for such an approach (Halsall 2003: 177–214). Here is not the place to rehearse views and opinions relating to the motivations, biases, and socio-political contexts of written sources, and it will suffice here to note simply that such materials have largely, if not wholly, determined the frame of reference for the study of military activity in Anglo-Saxon England.

In general terms, then, and on the basis of the wide-ranging examples noted above, the archaeology of warfare takes many forms. It remains now to explore some of the forms evident in Anglo-Saxon England and to examine potential lines of interpretation.

Social Complexity

Burial archaeology provides an excellent medium through which to examine the emergence and changing nature of warrior culture between the fifth and seventh centuries, while later burials provide more direct indications of interpersonal violence. Detailed studies of the material culture of the warrior in various regions of early medieval Europe have revealed evidence for a ranked society based on kin groups within which social status — at least among males — was clearly marked by distinctive weapon sets and age thresholds: a biological perspective based on early Anglo-Saxon cemetery populations indicates a close relationship between age and the bearing of arms with a threshold of twelve years of age seemingly the benchmark between boyhood and manhood, while, albeit much later, legal evidence from the reign of Æthelstan (924–39) records the age of criminal responsibility at twelve years of age and its subsequent raising to fifteen a short while later (Crawford 1999: 47; II As 1; VI As 12.1).

In fifth- to seventh-century Kentish society, for example, both the composition of weapon sets found in inhumation graves and the spatial patterning evident in many cemeteries reveal wealth/status divisions and social groupings/ allegiances with relative clarity (Hawkes 1982; Brookes 2007; Sayer 2009). The recently excavated cemeteries at Saltwood, near Folkestone, in East Kent provide an excellent case-study (Booth and others 2011), which can be related to several broader social themes.

A total of four early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries developed at Saltwood on an east-west axis within a landscape of pre-existing routeways laid out with respect to several Early Bronze Age barrows (Figure 1.1). Dating of the burials broadly encompasses a period from *c.* 500–700 on the basis of chronologies established for eastern Kentish cemeteries through comparison with continental sequences by Evison (Evison 1987) and developed by Brugmann (Brugmann 1997) and Richardson (Richardson 2005). Of interest to our topic are a series of four equally spaced high-status burials laid out in a linear arrangement southwards from the early focus of the western central cemetery during the late sixth to mid-seventh century (Figure 1.2). These graves established four new burial plots focused on the wealthy graves and, on the basis of associated grave finds, Ian Riddler suggests that the northernmost grave (C1048) is the earliest, succeeded by C1081 and then C6653, with a female grave, C6421, placed between the two latter male graves, possibly the third in the sequence, although he makes a good case for a straightforward north-to-south linear development (Riddler 2006).
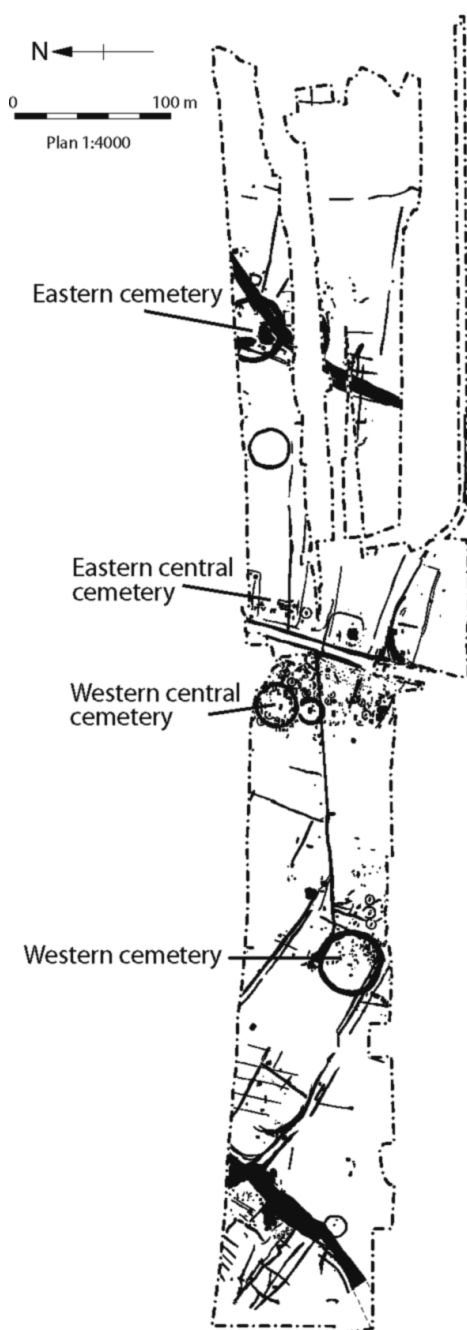
Grave assemblages with the three male burials indicate high social rank. The man in grave C1048 was buried in a coffin within a timber chamber and furnished with a sword, seventeen antler gaming pieces, two shield bosses, iron harness fittings, fourteen iron arrow-heads, a Frankish throwing-spear or angon, and a Byzantine or 'Coptic' copper-alloy bowl of Werner's B1 type, characteristically found in burials of late sixth- and early seventh-century date in southeast England but also in the Rhineland, southwestern Germany, Hungary, and Italy (Werner 1957; Harris 2006: 1). Immediately to the south, male grave C1081 also lay within a coffin and timber chamber, this time within a penannular ditch, and was buried with similarly impressive objects: a further B1 Coptic bowl, iron horse gear, two shield bosses, a Frankish angon, and a sword with a decorated pommel, a continental import dated to the late sixth or early seventh century (Ager 2006: 5) (Figure 1.3). The last of these wealthy graves, C6653, was male to judge by the finds, although no human remains

N◄—+——

0   100 m

Plan 1:4000

Eastern cemetery

Eastern central cemetery

Western central cemetery

Western cemetery

Figure 1.1. Plan of the four early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Saltwood, Kent. Figure provided by Oxford Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture and reproduced by kind permission of HS1 Limited.

Figure 1.2. The four equally spaced high-status graves at Saltwood, Kent. Figure provided by Oxford Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture and reproduced by kind permission of HS1 Limited.

Figure 1.3. Grave C1081 from Saltwood, Kent. Figure provided by Oxford Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture and reproduced by kind permission of HS1 Limited.
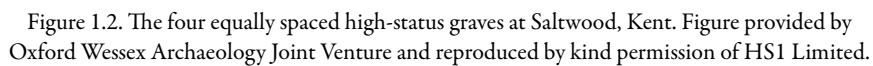
were found. Included in the grave were three shield bosses, a Frankish angon, a further Coptic bowl, a variant on the B1 type (Harris 2006: 2), and a sword with a pommel type known from other fifth- and sixth-century Anglo-Saxon cemeteries (Ager 2006: 4).

These ostentatiously wealthy graves may be read as charting the emergence of a powerful local warrior elite with access to material culture relating the individuals concerned to the very highest strata of contemporary society. Here, militarization might be usefully read as a function of the maintenance of social rank, status, and prestige rather than as a materialist corollary of land-grab and/ or competition over subsistence resources. Interestingly, as noted by Herbert Maschner in studies of American Northwest Coast societies (Maschner 1998), it is not always the most needy who engage in conflict, but rather the most powerful, a situation arguably borne out in the early Kentish Saltwood case and more widely in early Anglo-Saxon society.

Darwinian interpretations suggest that the motivation to engage in martial behaviour is primarily the self-interest of the individual or the kin group (Chagnon 1988; Wrangham and Peterson 1996). Perhaps Saltwood reflects such a process in motion by the fact that each of the wealthy warrior graves described above attracted a series of further weapon graves to judge from their proximity and alignment, if indeed the physical relationships between the Saltwood warrior graves reflect allegiances in life. Furthermore, once these plots were established, the cemetery space continued to develop with graves of a lesser status with a sharply lesser degree of militarization evident lower down the social scale. The fact that the Saltwood locale became the meeting place for the Domesday Hundred of Heane and that archeological finds indicate periodic gathering there from the cessation of burial in the late seventh century up to the twelfth century arguably provides a further indication of the long-term cohesion of local groups based around a burial site which perhaps also served an assembly function from its establishment around AD 500 (Glass and others forthcoming).

In his detailed and scholarly consideration of social transformations in the Merovingian region of Metz between the fifth and seventh centuries Guy Halsall has suggested that cemeteries served as key loci for social conference and social cohesion (Halsall 2003; Halsall 2006: 222). Beyond the evidence of the cemeteries themselves, however, there are no additional indications that the burial grounds examined by Halsall were central or focal places for activities other than inhumation, and the Saltwood case is probably the best attested case where a combination of both burial- and assembly-related activities can be observed.

The development of the high-status late sixth- and early seventh-century burial ground at Sutton Hoo (Suffolk) (Carver 2005) can also be argued to represent the same process of social agglomeration with military prowess closely linked to elite relations and maintenance of social hierarchy. A question is prompted by suggesting such a line of interpretation for burial sites such as Saltwood and Sutton Hoo: what prevented certain other known wealthy barrow burials of the late sixth and seventh centuries, such as Asthall (Oxfordshire) and Taplow (Buckinghamshire), from attracting satellite burials? It might be suggested that there are satellite burials yet to be found at these and other similar sites, but, if they are indeed isolated interments, it might be argued that they represent martial individuals, leaders of highly mobile groups living on the margins of society as opposed to signals of hegemony exercised from afar. While the Taplow burial has very plausibly been interpreted as a marker of later sixth-century Kentish hegemony over the Upper Thames Valley (Webster 1992), there is an alternative explanation to that of an 'official' planted in the region by the Kentish royal court. Instead, this prominent barrow burial might be that of a leader of a renegade band buried with trappings accumulated by brute force or intimidation — vast quantities of high-status objects were certainly acquired by such means by individuals in the later Viking Age. If Felix's contemporary *vita* of the late seventh-/early eighth-century saint Guthlac is to be believed, such unruly individuals were still roaming the English landscape over a century later than the Taplow interment (Colgrave 1956), and they were surely more common in the earlier period. Applying a Darwinian interpretation again to the archaeology of warrior burials, it can be suggested that wealthy interments that attracted successive graves represent ultimately successful lineages, whereas the isolated ones, rather than representing an emerging 'royal' class as is commonly held, instead reflect unsuccessful attempts to establish dominance beyond the burial of a single powerful person. In evolutionary terms, those defecting from groups can form new cooperating groups or might be punished for their defection (Boone 1992; Boyd and Richerson 2005: 166–203). Either way, an unsuccessful royal plant or a renegade leader are both possible explanations for such burials.

Initially, however, the line between renegade warlord and royalty must have been indeterminable, and the point in time when social groups became convinced of a difference (if there ever really was one beyond terminological semantics) is a matter of significant interest as a marker of the development of fixed social hierarchy in England. The emergence of permanent social classes, control of resources, and the ability to exercise hegemony is considered by many anthropologists to describe the emergence of entities that might be

called 'states' (Cohen 1978: 2–3). Anglo-Saxon England, from at least the seventh century, can be seen to exhibit just such features, although historians continue to debate whether even the unified late Anglo-Saxon kingdom of England can be properly termed a 'state' (for an excellent discussion of the matter, see Yorke 2009). I would suggest, on the basis of the anthropological definitions of Ronald Cohen and others, that certain of the earliest Anglo-Saxon kingdoms should indeed be considered states. Furthermore, recent work has shown the ability of late seventh- and eighth-century Mercia to exercise controlled violence in the form of organized judicial killings: yet another feature of socio-political entities with complex organizational capacities (Reynolds 2009c).

It has been persuasively argued in a study of younger males and their tendency towards violence that the presence of disenfranchised males in any given society is a measure of its ability to practise warfare (Wilson and Daly 1985). In this vein, archaeology provides examples of groups of armed males of sixth- and seventh-century date buried either as multiple interments or in closely associated graves at the margins of cemeteries or in otherwise remote locations. At Tidworth on Salisbury Plain four males were found laid side-by-side in a single isolated grave dug close to the county boundary between Hampshire and Wiltshire (Härke and Entwhistle 2002) (Figure 1.4). The age range of the individuals was between eighteen and forty-five and older, while each of the men was buried with a spear, three of them with a shield also: dating on the basis of the grave finds places this multiple interment in the mid-sixth century. At Empingham (Rutland), a grave of the late fifth or sixth century containing three adult males, all with weapons, and a (probably female) child broadly parallels the Tidworth burial (Timby 1996: 15). While Härke and Entwhistle report that the Empingham grave lay within an otherwise 'normal' community cemetery, it was in fact situated away from the main burial group and can thus be argued to be of liminal (?disenfranchised) character (Härke and Entwhistle 2002: 50; Reynolds 2009a: 192). At Frilford (Berkshire) a seventh- or eighth-century burial of a warrior with a short sword, or seax, in an isolated grave brings us closer to the period of the marauding Guthlac prior to his conversion and repentance and provides the physical trace that such an individual might leave, especially so late in the day with regard to the period of furnished male burial in England (Bradford and Goodchild 1939: 37–39). Overall, the archaeology of militarization from early Anglo-Saxon England finds excellent parallels in comparative anthropology.

Following the demise of the deposition of material culture in graves after the early eighth century, identifying warrior burials becomes rather more prob-
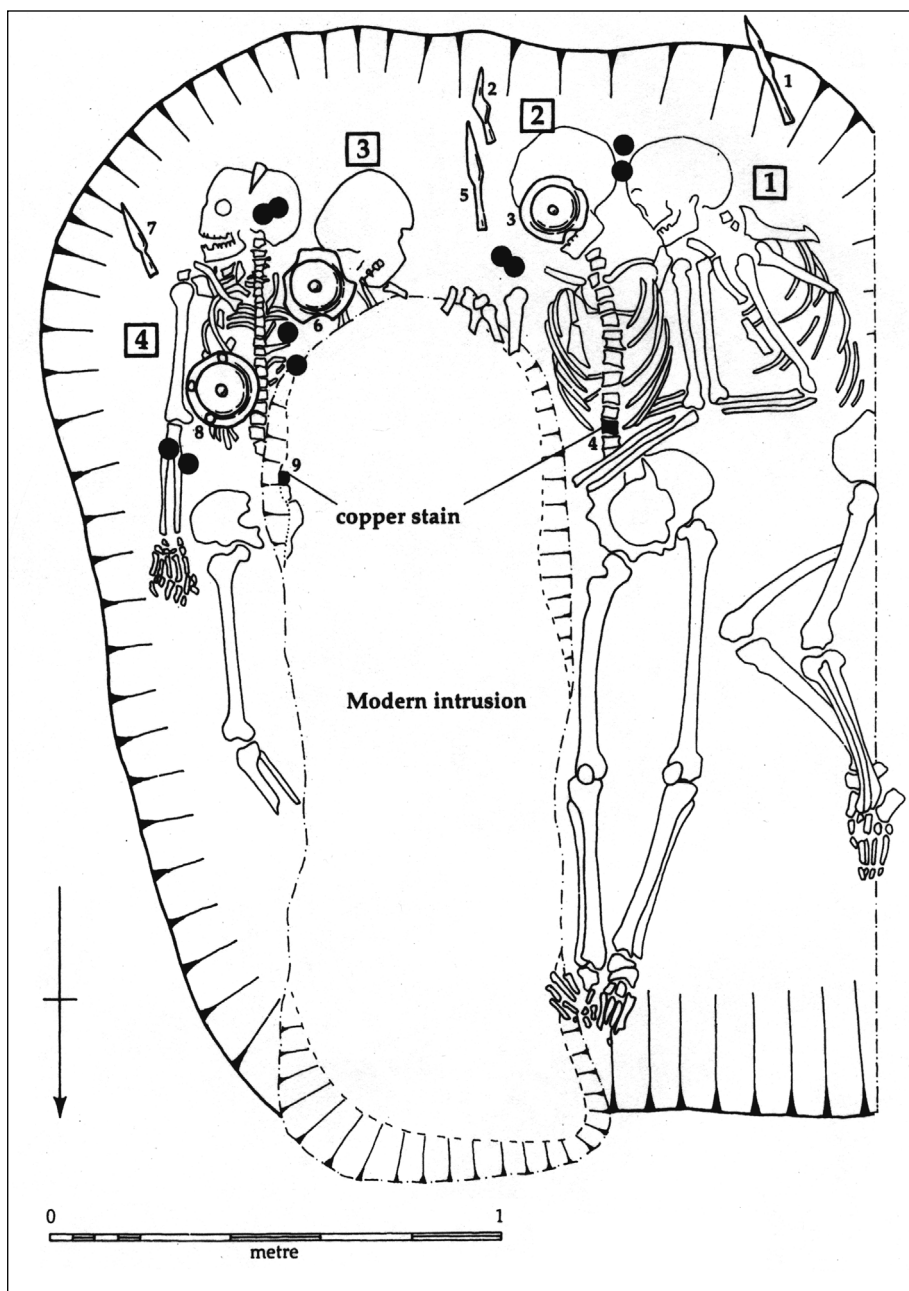
Figure 1.4. The sixth-century multiple warrior grave from Tidworth, Hampshire.
Reproduced with permission of Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society.

lematic, and (outwith a Scandinavian milieu) evidence for militarized activity in the form of human remains takes on an entirely different character being based on patterns of injury rather than material culture (see below). At Eccles in Kent, for example, an otherwise 'normal' community cemetery of seventh- or eighth-century date contained six adult males with injury patterns characteristic of hand-to-hand fighting (Wenham 1989); most likely individuals killed in combat and buried by their compatriots (see below). The Christian Anglo-Saxon period, therefore, provides more explicit evidence for combat, whereas the earlier period (largely but not exclusively) reveals the material culture signature of a warrior society and thus warlike intentions if not actual conflict.

The only contexts where weapon burials are found in England after the eighth century are the few known ninth- and tenth-century Viking burials from both within and without the Danelaw (Graham-Campbell 2001), and thus our knowledge of weapons and weaponry of the Christian Anglo-Saxon period is based mainly on iconographic evidence drawn from sculpture and manuscripts backed up by relatively few objects, with the notable exception of swords (Davidson 1962; Bone 1989; Pierce 2002).

While weapon finds of the later period are generally scarce, a series of discoveries is known from various contexts. The recent (probably mid-seventh-century) Staffordshire hoard has yet to be satisfactorily explained (Leahy and Bland 2009), although one wonders if it simply represents stolen loot — the seventh-century equivalent of the 'Great Train Robbery' — in view of the fact that England lacks the remarkable ritual weapon deposits found in the Scandinavian region, which in any case comprise complete weapons as opposed to stripped-down loot and which belong mainly to the Roman Iron Age, specifically the period between the second and fifth centuries AD (see the various studies in Jørgensen, Storgaard, and Thomsen 2003): one wonders if a substantial deposit of iron blades remains to be found in the vicinity of the Staffordshire hoard. A possible context for the gathering together of the leading men of a kingdom, other than for the purposes of warfare, is an assembly. It may not be too far-fetched to visualize weapons stored in a strong room, which was subsequently pillaged.

Objects deposited with a potentially ritual motivation (i.e. from watery places) include ninth- and tenth-century swords from the River Thames at Abingdon and in London, the River Witham, from Fiskerton (Lincolnshire) and Lincoln, and the tenth- or eleventh-century deposit of axes of probable Scandinavian type from London Bridge (Hinton 1974: 1–7; Davidson 1962: pl. X, nos 66 and 68; Webster 1991; Wheeler 1927: 18–23; Reynolds and Semple 2011). A careful contextual analysis of such finds remains to be under-

taken and thus further comment must await a quantified view, but it is clear enough that very many of the known sword finds are from rivers. Of potential relevance here is an intriguing reference in a charter of 962 (S702), which records how a certain Ecgferth was drowned 'with the sword that hung on his hip', although why he was drowned or accompanied with his weapon is unknown (Robertson 1956: 93, no. 44). Given that the charter records Ecgferth's forfeiture of an estate at Sunbury (Middlesex), a judicial context (perhaps even an ordeal) for his drowning is likely — that he was committed to the water with his sword invites an interpretation that emphasizes the potency of the sword as a symbol of power.[2] Charlotte Fabech, with reference to earlier research, has noted that in medieval Scandinavia swords were closely associated with individuals and that when their owners could not use them any longer, or had no heir to which to bequeath them, deposition in a place where the object could not be recovered was a way of avoiding 'dishonour' to the sword itself (Fabech 2006: 29; Geibig 1991). In Ecgferth's case, perhaps both individual and (by default) sword had been dishonoured and a watery grave deemed suitable for both owner and weapon. The key point to note here is that weapon finds from watery places need not be related explicitly to conflict or pre- or post-battle rituals. A further noteworthy issue relating to weapons from watery contexts is that (in England) they belong to the Christian period and are almost unknown from the pagan period, perhaps suggesting the continued potency of the sword as object and symbol across the entire period, but that once inhumation graves became inappropriate places to inter swords with their owners, rivers served as acceptable repositories.

While the relative paucity of burials with weapon injuries from early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries has long been recognized (although see Stuckert 2010 below), there is a series of later Anglo-Saxon burial sites with well-attested skeletal traces of hand-to-hand fighting. In England, finds of Anglo-Saxon judicial execution cemeteries (dated broadly between the later seventh and twelfth centuries) were initially mistakenly interpreted as battle cemeteries, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century (Reynolds 2009a: 56–60), but a careful contextual approach to discoveries of human remains can allow distinctions of cause to be established.

From the Viking Age, evidence for military activity is known from a series of English cemeteries where injury patterns characterized by blows from edged

---

[2] The 'personality' of edged weapons, particularly swords, is the topic of doctoral research currently being undertaken by Sue Brunning at the University College London.

weapons to the head, shoulders, and upper and lower arms reflect typical pathologies sustained in hand-to-hand combat (Inglemark 1939; Novak 2000; Wenham 1989). Two categories of burials resulting from warfare during this period can be identified (Reynolds 2009a: 40): interments made in otherwise normative burial grounds, such as parish and other community cemeteries, and mass burials resulting from summary clearance of battlefields. The former type are likely to involve victims recovered from the site of conflict and buried by their own side, whereas the latter are likely to comprise mass burials of the vanquished, probably exclusively of males, presumably buried by the victors. Cemeteries of the eleventh century at Portchester Castle (Hampshire) and St Andrew's Fishergate (York) both contain high proportions of male burials with weapon injuries (Hooper 1976; Stroud 1993), and both cases are best explained as resulting from military encounters with the individuals concerned being brought back to their respective parish cemeteries for burial.

A striking new discovery from Ridgeway Hill, Weymouth (Dorset) surely represents the exact opposite. Here, the remains of fifty-one decapitated males have recently been excavated from a large pit. Isotope analysis of teeth from ten of the bodies apparently reveals a Scandinavian origin for those so examined, while radiocarbon determinations place the remains in the period *c*. 910–1030.[3]

Other mass burials are known from England dating broadly to this period (Reynolds 2009a: 43–44), but none can be shown with such confidence to relate specifically to a group of Vikings, in this case almost certainly captured and summarily executed by Anglo-Saxons (Figure 1.5). Human remains from mid-ninth-century levels in York, including an adult male aged twenty-five to thirty-five apparently thrown into a pit, and a mixed-sex group of eleven individuals from a pit dated to the eleventh or twelfth century from the Fleet Valley in London (Hall 1984: 45–47; McCann 1993: 46–47) suggest rather more random killings, perhaps better characterized as the remains of massacre victims (i.e. random non-combatants) and a further category of burial evidence related to warfare, taking massacre in the sense 'a general slaughter' (Thompson 1995: 838). Indeed, the mode of execution of the Weymouth Vikings — their demise resulting not directly from battle but more likely from formulaic mass killing following captivity — suggests that they are better placed in the massacre category, albeit battle-related.

---

[3] See 'Weymouth Ridgeway Skeletons "Scandinavian Vikings"' <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/dorset/8563377.stm> [accessed 28 February 2013] (A. Boyle, personal communication, 2010).

Figure 1.5. The mass grave of fifty-one Vikings from Ridgeway Hill, Weymouth.
Copyright: Oxford Archaeology.

In conclusion, the changing nature of martial behaviour in Anglo-Saxon society can be read from the burial record whereby the emergence of stratified warrior elites can be observed particularly in the sixth and seventh centuries, with evidence of larger-scale conflicts (with formal military obligations exacted by elites evidenced from the eighth century and later in charters) suggested by larger numbers of burials with edged weapon injuries from albeit fewer post-Conversion cemeteries. Again, a thorough survey of weapon injuries across the period is necessary.

Geographical Scale: Central and Focal Places

Spatial aspects of conflict are especially significant with regard to the physical dimension of warfare. European early medieval populations and their landscapes show evidence for militarization in different ways, which can be related to social complexity. The earliest 'successor' societies between the fifth and seventh centuries in the post-Roman west are in the main characterized in two distinctive ways. In the 'Germanic' areas of Europe, military culture is reflected by the conspicuous display of war gear found largely in inhumation cemeteries and weapon hoards, while regions (mostly) beyond the limits both of the former Roman Limes and the extent of Germanic cultural influence, the so-
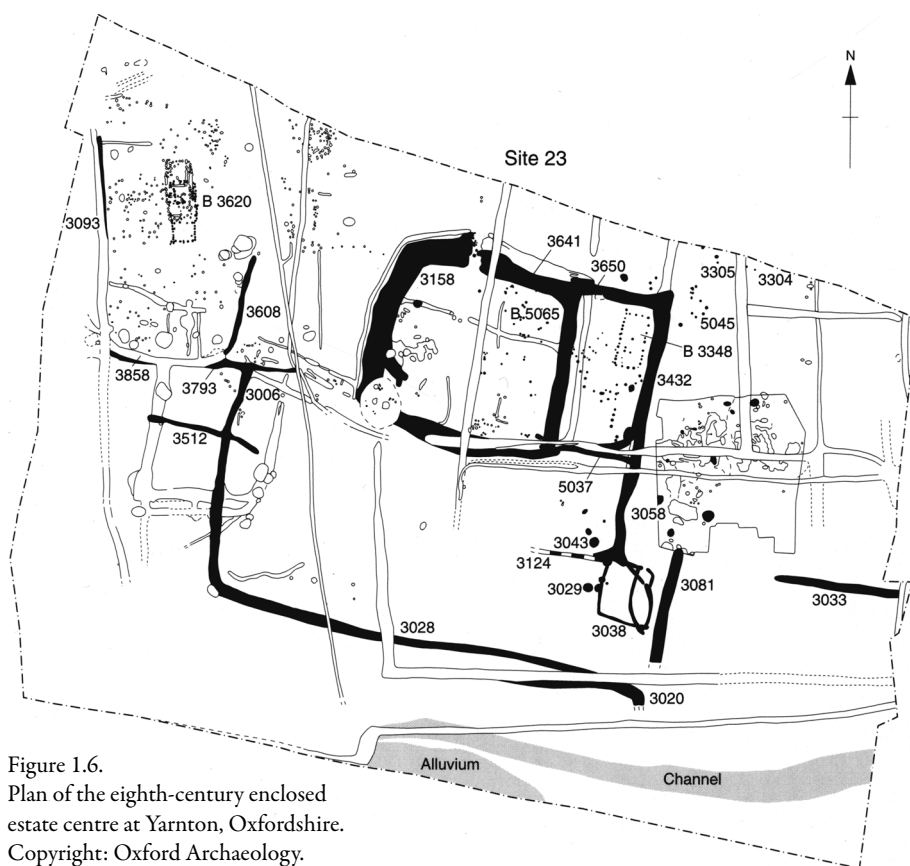
Figure 1.6.
Plan of the eighth-century enclosed
estate centre at Yarnton, Oxfordshire.
Copyright: Oxford Archaeology.

called 'Celtic' areas, engaged with the refurbishment and *de novo* construction
of monumental fortifications, namely hill-forts, with almost no trace of the
material culture of warfare and next to nothing from the burial record left by
those societies.

Defensible Iron Age sites are reused across Europe, from Scotland to Spain,
and to the east in Poland, Russia, and the Baltic Sea region; such reoccupa-
tion is most common in the period from the fifth/sixth century until the sev-
enth/eighth century (Edwards 1990; Foster 1995; Castellanos and Martín
Viso 2005; Kobyliński 1990). In Ireland, ring-forts, known as 'raths' if built
of earth and 'cashels' if built of stone, were seemingly the residences of local
rulers in the second half of the first millennium AD, particularly the period
c. 500–850, while higher status secular strongholds, known as 'duns', are found
inside new or refurbished hill-forts (Stout 1997). In Anglo-Saxon England,

private fortified residences of secular elites are almost unknown until the late Anglo-Saxon period in the form of enclosed residences and timber and masonry towers (Reynolds 1999; Thomas 2008; Shapland 2008). Such installations are likely to have formed linkages and nodes in networks of local and regional communications and are considered in detail in this volume by John Baker and Stuart Brookes. One earlier exception is the recently excavated site at Yarnton (Oxfordshire), where an eighth-century estate centre was enclosed by a substantial ditch averaging 5 m in width and up to 3 m in depth when originally dug (Hey 2004: 139–66) (Figure 1.6). While the principal function of the site was almost certainly that of a local agricultural centre, it is certainly of a defensible nature, and its location in southern Mercia at this time may well have dictated the need for a stout enclosure for reasons of security (see 'Socio-Political Context' below).

Several interesting issues arise from this discussion with an important bearing on how degrees of social complexity are measured in post-Roman Europe. While Germanic societies had kings who produced written laws and exercised extensive hegemonies, among other indicators of the development of early state-like societies, non-Germanic groups (of the fifth to seventh centuries — and later in certain regions) were the ones who constructed and maintained impressive power centres of the kind that only became widespread elsewhere in Europe during the Viking Age and only then in the context of established states with powerful rulers.

Much historical writing still tends to view post-Roman societies as less 'civilized' and less complex by default (Hills 2007). In western Britain and Wales, however, a series of well-known inscriptions on memorial stones (the so-called Class I stones of the fifth century and later dates) record the names of early rulers, applying epithets such as 'Protector' which only serve to underpin the image of social groups dominated and exploited by overbearing warlords, such as those portrayed in the key mid-sixth-century text *De excidio Britanniae* written by the probably Welsh monk Gildas (Davies 1982: 92–93; Winterbottom 1978). In early medieval North Britain, the Picts have left a series of fine iconographic representations of a pre-Viking, stratified, warrior society in the form of inscribed stones, most notably the slabs from Aberlemno churchyard (Moray) and the magnificent Sueno's Stone (Angus) (Henderson and Henderson 2004: 69, fig. 82; 135, fig. 195). On the basis of archaeology alone, the complexity and structure of the 'Celtic' power centres, of which the best known examples include Burghead (Morayshire), Dinas Powys (Dyfed), Dunnadd (Lothian), and South Cadbury (Somerset), matches that observed only at sites of seventh-century and later date more widely in the Germanic regions and in many

respects outstrips the archaeology of many of the West Saxon burghal forts, or at least their late ninth- and tenth-century phases, of which more below.

In basic terms, the mode of social articulation of non-Germanic societies (at least until the late seventh century, but later in the Pictish region) might be termed 'nodal', while in the Germanic regions a 'dispersed' character to social and administrative organization can be observed from the early post-Roman centuries persisting up to the eleventh if not the twelfth century in many regions. The major lesson here is that there is not necessarily a clear connection between impressive 'central places' and the degree or longevity of power exercised over landscape. The administrative geography of Anglo-Saxon Wessex, which can be most clearly reconstructed for the late Anglo-Saxon period (Reynolds 1999), is physically unimpressive when viewed between blinkers imprinted with a view of the classical world as the template of civil society, yet its social systems were arguably far more advantageous with regard to their flexibility, social inclusiveness, and resistance to external threat (see below). While 'Celtic' societies may have possessed hill-forts with monumental elements, evidence for production of high-status goods, and so on, they might be better read as archaeological expressions of paranoia and insecurity, as 'islands' of power in the landscape.

Having noted the issue of 'nodal' versus 'dispersed' power structures, what follows concentrates on one of the most significant recent realizations in Anglo-Saxon archaeology: that ninth-century burghal foundations were largely devoid of settlement activity up to perhaps two or three generations, or up to one hundred years, after their initial construction (Astill 2006: 236).

That the burghal forts attributed to Alfred of Wessex and Edward the Elder did not assume an urban character in most cases until the later tenth or early eleventh century has fundamental implications for English landscape and urban history, which requires a recasting of the long-established, seamless wics-to-burhs model of English urban origins, which has lain largely unchallenged since the mid-1970s and Martin Biddle's highly influential synthesis (Biddle 1976). A key point, therefore, is that the Anglo-Saxon response to Viking military threat did not spur urban development but instead added a further element to a landscape of primarily dispersed functions. It remains the case that while certain burhs such as Oxford and Winchester have revealed extensive evidence for occupation from the late ninth century, other major fortifications listed in the Burghal Hidage such as Lydford (if the identification is correct) and Wallingford have revealed virtually no settlement-related activity prior to the twelfth century (Hill and Rumble 1996; Christie and others, this volume), although a mint (with limited output) is known at Lydford between the reigns of Edward the Martyr (975–78) and Edward the Confessor (1042–66) and

also at Wallingford during the reign of Æthelstan (924–39) and later recorded in the Domesday Survey (Hill 1996: 209 and 221; DB, fol. 56ʳ). Mints associated with places that did not subsequently develop an urban character are well attested in Wessex (for example, Cissbury (Sussex) and Old Sarum (Wiltshire)), which lends support to the view that non-urban burghal foundations were the norm rather than the exception.

A series of major issues are raised by the realizations considered above. Additionally, there is the possibility that Viking incursion in the ninth century did have a major impact on the development of towns, but that (in Wessex) it retarded their emergence rather than stimulated it. For much of the late ninth and earlier tenth century, towns were apparently a rare phenomenon in Anglo-Saxon England. Nevertheless, the Anglo-Saxon 'state' was able to maintain a complex administrative framework with a considerable organizational capacity largely without major central places, but instead dependent upon a network of dispersed functions or 'focal' places. (Aston 1986; Astill 2006: 242; Reynolds 2005). A further matter is whether a linear urban trajectory based on the view of urban places as representing what geographers have termed 'climax communities' is correct, or even applicable at all, in an early medieval English context. The key issue here is that applying models ultimately derived from studying classical societies, where towns are viewed as the most sophisticated form of settlement and a clear indicator of a supremely civilized society, has arguably cast early medieval societies in an unfavourable light. I would argue that, from an evolutionary perspective, non-urban societies are far more 'successful' for the reasons of flexibility and sustainability outlined above.

There are many cases of decentralized societies, for example Late Iron Age Scotland, nineteenth-century indigenous American Indians, or contemporary Middle Eastern fundamentalists, resisting conquest, even by far better equipped aggressors (Rapoport 1971: vii) and such a perspective perhaps sheds light on the ability of the ninth-century kingdom of Wessex to avoid capitulation in the face of Viking incursion. An important issue here, then, is that societies which are more successful at repulsing or enduring conquest can also be those whose material traces pale in comparison — in terms of immediate visual impact — to more fragile, yet technologically accomplished ones.

The study of urban places has a much longer historiography in the field of classical archaeology than in medieval studies, and medievalists have been criticized for avoiding explicitly theorized approaches (Horden 2000: 485). What is needed, of course, is a theorization of medieval towns, across the entire period, which engages directly with medieval towns in contemporary context, wider comparative study being the next step. Reconceptualizing burghal places,

not as planned urban ventures, at least not initially, but as focal elements in a complex but dispersed administrative system provides a starting point for new modes of enquiry.

There is an interesting dialogue now to be had between students of fortifications either side of the Norman Conquest with regard to interpretive paradigms. While the discipline of 'castle studies' has seen vigorous debate in recent years, polarized into what can be fairly termed 'pragmatic' and 'symbolic' schools of thought, a new generation of scholars is moving beyond such a simplistic approach to address interdisciplinary social themes (Creighton and Liddiard 2008). The study of Anglo-Saxon fortifications has yet to be examined from such perspectives, which should provide fruitful insights into contemporary motivations and perceptions of such sites. While the basic premise for the network of forts described in the Burghal Hidage was probably a military one, there is much more to be learned about the social role that such sites played in relation to their wider landscapes — especially now that 'hinterland' is surely an inappropriate term (applying the *OED* definition of 'an area served by a port or other centre' (Thompson 1995: 642)) once an urban character for these sites is written out of the story, at least until the later tenth century.

Socio-Political Context

As noted in the Introduction, conflict can be seen to perform a wide range of functions, from ritualized localized dispute settlement to out and out ravaging with hues in between. It is possible to identify, or at least suggest, archaeological correlates for different situations, and what follows considers how this might be achieved.

How conflict locations were determined is a matter of significant interest for a number of reasons. Did armies meet by accident? Were confrontations predetermined? Was there such a thing as battlefield etiquette? Did early medieval military strategies involve elements of surprise and ambush? The answer, of course, is all of the above. Despite such a range of situations, anthropological studies worldwide reveal certain generic attributes to the setting of conflict, which are indeed applicable to Anglo-Saxon England.

It has been noted, for example, that 'interregional conflicts tend to be most visible on the frontiers between ethnic groups' (Maschner and Reedy-Maschner 1998: 24), and the locations of battles throughout the Anglo-Saxon period has much to reveal with regard to this notion, and a series of encounters between major polities throughout the period can be shown to exhibit just such a

pattern. Conflicts between the West Saxons and both the Mercians and the Dumnonians of south-western England serve to illustrate this point, although a quantified analysis is required and is indeed in progress.[4] It is notable that one of the few early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries to reveal a significant proportion of male burials with edged weapon injuries is that at Blacknall Field, near Pewsey in Wiltshire, a place which lay during the period of the cemetery's use on the cultural ecotone between 'Germanic' societies to the east and 'British' ones to the west (Annable and Eagles 2010; Stuckert 2010).

Archaeologically, it may be possible to identify certain attributes relating to settlement patterns in border regions subject to conflict. The existence of a long-disputed frontier zone between the Mercians and West Saxons, along a corridor stretching from Bath in the west to London in the east, throughout the course of the eighth century may have prevented the re-emergence of former Roman towns as early medieval central places (Reynolds and Langlands 2006: 41–43). With the exception of *Aquae Sulis* (Bath) and *Pontibus* (Staines), it is notable that (in contrast to regions to the north and south) none of the other Roman centres in this border area — *Abonae* (Sea Mills), *Verlucio* (Sandy Lane, near Calne), the small Roman town at the foot of Silbury Hill, *Cunetio* (near Marlborough), and *Calleva Atrebatum* (Silchester) — re-emerged as nodal places. In a comparative context, it has been noted in a study of northern Italy in the early Lombard period that regions of longer-term dispute do not exhibit the same degree of central place continuity as regions conquered rapidly (Brogiolo 2000: 310). The implication here is that a further indirect measure of the degree and nature of conflict in a region may be reflected in the longevity or re-emergence of central places.

Boundary locations are known in a variety of contexts throughout the Anglo-Saxon period as appropriate places for the settlement of disputes, not just by force but by verbal exchange, ranging from high-level ideological encounter to matters of very local concern. Here one thinks of Bede's account of the missionary Augustine summoning 'the bishops and teachers of the neighbouring British kingdom to conference at a place which is still called in English *Augustinæs Ac*, that is Augustine's Oak, on the borders of the Hwicce and the West Saxons' (Bede *HE* II. 2). In a local setting, Aliki Pantos has shown how the assembly sites of hundreds and wapentakes frequently lie on the boundaries of internal subdivisions of these self-contained judicial territories, even though they may also be situated at the centre of such districts (Pantos 2003; Reynolds

---

[4] Doctoral thesis currently in progress at University College London by Tom Williams.

1999). The underlying theme in these cases, and those of inter-polity warfare, is likely to be that of neutrality of location.

There is almost certainly more to the location of military encounters. In certain situations, envoys must have played a role in communicating when and where adversaries would confront each other, while even a cursory scan of the topographical character of battle sites, either where explicitly described in written sources or recoverable by studying the modern landscape on the basis of place-name identifications, shows that features of independently attested cultural meaning to early medieval societies more widely were often chosen as suitable locations. As Guy Halsall's preliminary study of Anglo-Saxon battle sites during the period 600–850 reveals, river crossings and pre-existing features (hill-forts, barrows, and former Roman towns) account for the majority of places (Halsall 1989: 165). Halsall's view, quite plausibly, is that ancient enclosures were unlikely to have been chosen for tactical defensive reasons — a situation borne out generally outside the 'Celtic' regions by the lack of evidence for refortification of such sites during the early and middle Anglo-Saxon periods — and that ancient monuments were appropriated by armies as well-known locations and occupied as a form of highly visible challenge to enemies. Sarah Semple suggests that the referencing of ancient sites for dramatic activities should be seen as the overt creation of 'theatres of power' (Semple 2009).

References to battles at Woden's Barrow, the substantial neolithic long barrow now known as Adam's Grave on the northern scarp of the Pewsey Vale in Wiltshire, in *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entries for 592 and 715 present explicit examples of a location chosen for a fight which was not only named after a mythical figure but which is still a striking way-marker along the course of the Great Ridgeway just south of the massive linear earthwork Wansdyke, the latter arguably once the frontier between Wessex and Mercia along the corridor discussed above (Whitelock, Douglas, and Tucker 1961: 14, 26; Reynolds and Langlands 2006; Baker and Brookes 2013; Reynolds and Williams forthcoming) (Figure 1.7). With regard to Halsall's suggestion of sites being chosen in order to taunt opponents, just such a situation can be found in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 1006 which relates how, after burning Wallingford, the Vikings 'turned along Ashdown to Cuckamsley [Cwichelm's Barrow], and waited [for the English] there for what had been proudly threatened, for it had often been said that if they went to Cuckamsley, they would never get to the sea' (Whitelock, Douglas, and Tucker 1961: 88). The English did not take up the challenge on this occasion but instead engaged the Viking force further south at Kennet in Wiltshire only to lose the encounter (ASC s.a. 1006). Broader anthropological observations suggest that 'intra-regional conflicts are most

Figure 1.7. Woden's Barrow looking east. The Ridgeway passes
immediately to the east end of the mound. Copyright: Paul Tubb.

visible in populous core areas near the centre of a cultural region' (Maschner
and Reedy-Maschner 1998: 24), and thus culturally iconic landmarks, such as
Cwichelm's Barrow, can be seen to reflect such a pattern. Although Woden's
Barrow lay on a major boundary, its local cultural significance cannot be
doubted.

While Halsall (Halsall 1989: 166) plays down the use of scouts, the very
nature of the West Saxon response to the attempted Viking conquest of Wessex
via Reading in 870, for example, suggests in itself an effective communications
network, based both on riders and scouts and also, very likely, on a network of
local signalling and sighting points as described by Stuart Brookes and John
Baker (this volume and Baker and Brookes 2013, chap. 5). The ability of the
Wessex nobles to quickly raise a levy and mobilize against a substantial Viking
army based at Reading must surely be read as an indicator of an embedded and
efficient system; yet, even the name of the place where the English put a large
detachment of the Vikings to flight after encountering them invites a deeper
meaning on the part of the victors to the outcome of the fight, if indeed the
location (*Englefield*) (ASC s.a. 871) was named in memory of the place where
the English took the day. Margaret Gelling has reported that 'the Angles of
Englefield would not have been mentioned in a place-name if they had not been
exceptional' in view of the fact that Berkshire place-names 'contain none of
the Anglian features noted in O[xfordshire]' (Gelling 1976: 839), but Patrick

Wormald's discussion of the genesis of the concept of *Engla Lond* (England) makes it clear that among the ninth-century Mercians and West Saxons, the term *Angelcynn* was commonly understood to refer collectively to the English (Wormald 1994: 11). Indeed, the treaty drawn up between King Alfred and the Viking leader Guthrum between 880 and 890, describing the boundary between Wessex (including English Mercia) and the Danelaw, reports that Alfred was supported in his bargaining by the leading men of '*ealles Angelcynnes witan*' (the councillors of all the English nation) (Cambridge, CCC, MS 383; Attenborough 1922: 98–99; Blackburn 1998: 105–23). While it is generally accepted that such a strong sense of 'English' unity was a feature particularly of the period following Alfred's seizure of London from the Danes in around 886 (Brown 1991: 267–68; Keynes 1998: 24–25), earlier beginnings for such a consciousness are evident (Wormald 1994). With regard to marking a victory over a people clearly of Scandinavian origin, commemorating the place with a name that distinguished the English over the foreigners is an equally plausible route by which the place received its name. Further support for this view lies in the fact that the name of the battle site refers to open country (OE *feld*), rather than a settlement. Even though the battle itself was fought in 871, the *Chronicle* entry that refers to it, along with the rest of the annals reporting events in the 870s, probably took their present form *c.* 890×892 allowing for the name *Englefield* to have been coined up to twenty years later than the battle itself and thus during the most notable period of Alfred's fostering of 'Englishness'. Of further bearing on this matter is the Latin translation (*Anglorum campus*) of the English nomenclature (*Englafeld*) provided by King Alfred's contemporary biographer Asser (chap. 35) when describing the same location (Stevenson 1904: 27). Both Latin *campus* and Old English *feld* carry the additional meaning of 'a field of battle' and 'battle' respectively (Smith 1864: 145; Roberts and Kay 1995: II, 934).

So far, we have discussed in this section situations of major conflict between states and mass invaders. Motivations other than state-level armed violence, however, are likely to leave archaeological traces which might be indistinguishable from higher order conflicts, particularly if the size of armies is drawn into consideration. While I do not wish to rehearse the literature relating to numbers of troops in early medieval warbands, which has been succinctly reviewed most recently by Guy Halsall (Halsall 2003), it is worth making the point that an engagement of armies of the order of magnitude relayed in the late seventh-century laws of the West Saxon king Ine (upwards of thirty-five men) may, following conflict, leave little in the burial or artefactual record to allow the difference to be determined with the material outcome of a small-scale local

feud. A dispute recorded in a late tenth-century charter, for example, relays the slaying of sixteen members of a household engaged in a feud with the widow of a certain unruly Wulfbold (Robertson 1956: 128–31, no. LXIII): if only men were killed then it might be impossible to distinguish the burials of the victims from individuals engaged in professional warfare. Halsall (Halsall 2003: 59) has argued that the figures provided by Ine's laws ('we call up to seven men thieves; from seven to thirty-five is a band; above that is an army'; Ine 13.1) should not be taken as 'a descriptive statement of the normal size of seventh-century armies', although no upward limit is stated which leaves infinite leeway with regard to the potential size of a force deemed to be an army.

A Chronological Perspective on Anglo-Saxon Militarization

Having established how different facets of military activity reflect socio-political developments, and having noted important comparative elements in Anglo-Saxon society in cross-cultural and cross-chronological contexts, it is necessary now to summarize specifically archaeological patterns observable in Anglo-Saxon England from the fifth to the eleventh century, bearing in mind that a much higher definition of the evidence is possible (and is indeed posited in Baker and Brookes 2013).

The Post-Roman Phase — Fifth to Sixth Centuries

This period is characterized principally by weapon burials. Weapon injuries, on the other hand, are relatively few and provide a stark contrast to the image supplied by (albeit much later) written sources of a society continually engaged in violent activity resulting from the arrival of Germanic groups from southern Scandinavia and Continental Europe and their subsequent westward expansion. While many fatal injuries leave no observable skeletal pathologies, those acquired during hand-to-hand combat are relatively easily sustained, and it remains a point of significant interest that larger numbers of instances of cut marks and blunt force trauma are not found from the many known cemeteries of this period. Beyond the 'Celtic' areas, fortified refuges and residences and inscribed stones commemorating or depicting warriors are unknown.

The Period of Kingdom Formation — Later Sixth to Eighth Centuries

Military activity during this phase is characterized most spectacularly by the emergence of wealthy, or 'princely' male barrow burials from the middle of the sixth century, although this class of interment disappears from view by the

mid-seventh century. A few burials of sub-princely type are known. From the eighth century, weapon burials are no longer found, and, with the exception of sword fittings and a few other object types, weaponry largely disappears from view, although weapon injuries are found in greater numbers from this time within certain individual cemeteries. Fortified settlements appear for the first time beyond the 'Celtic' areas (where they appear to die out) in the kingdom of Mercia, but not elsewhere, apart from monastic foundations inside hill-forts and former Roman towns. As expressions of state-level militarization, the construction of linear earthworks and the probable use of hill-forts as refuges also characterize the period of kingdom formation in early England (see Baker and Brookes 2013, chaps 2, 4, and 7).

The Viking Ages

The existence of fortified sites outside Mercia in the eighth and earlier ninth centuries appears likely, certainly on the basis of documentary evidence (see Yorke this volume). Archaeology has not yet provided secure evidence for overtly defensive sites prior to the late ninth and tenth centuries, by which time the major West Saxon burghal fortifications appear to have been founded principally, but perhaps not exclusively, for the purposes of defence. Beginning in the eighth century, but better known from the ninth century and later (see below), manuscript sources and a series of weapon finds from rivers provide the principal means of studying warrior culture. By the tenth and eleventh centuries local defensive networks complemented larger-scale fortifications, while documentary evidence reveals the nature of military organization with increasing clarity. Mass burials are known which appear to reflect the archaeology of both civilian massacre and organized conflict.

Discussion

This essay has ranged across the Anglo-Saxon period to investigate the variety of contexts where warfare and militarization have left archaeological footprints. It is suggested that Anglo-Saxon society, broadly speaking, conforms to many of the generic templates provided by anthropologists which describe and interpret the nature of militarization in relation to different social and political circumstances. While debates in anthropology remain healthily vigorous with regard to the underlying motivations for violence in human societies, commonalities can be observed on the macro-scale across time and space. The principal aims of this essay were to identify the range of contexts for militariza-

tion in Anglo-Saxon society as related to the three themes of social complexity, geographical scale, and socio-political relationships and then to explore within each of these how the patterns and processes identified may be related to broader observations of the nature of human societies. Studying medieval societies in such a way has much to offer more broadly to understanding violence in human situations, but more particularly medieval societies provide material, textual, toponymic, and iconographic perspectives on pre-industrial societies where many similarities (at least in north-western Europe) can be observed with prehistoric societies, which have left only the physical aspect for study. The crucial point here, then, is that in many ways early medieval societies can provide independently validated templates for material culture signatures for societies at different stages of social complexity, which may be applied to great effect in cross-cultural and cross-chronological contexts. While medieval archaeology has been enlivened by explicit engagements with anthropological and social science theory — inspired in many ways by sharp criticism by archaeologists working on prehistoric societies — it is now time to engage in a two-way dialogue using the powerful tools at the hands of medievalists to inform on the nature of other societies which have left only physical evidence.

Conclusions

Ultimately conflict is related to competition, whatever its context. The degree of social complexity in any given society will determine its archaeological manifestation, and thus evidence for conflict and militarization has much to say, both directly and indirectly, about social organization and societal development. Studies of the practice and nature of warfare have tended to take a linear track view of complexity as developing hand-in-hand with state-like structures in Anglo-Saxon England. While there may be justifications to such an approach, this essay has attempted to argue that a comparative dimension is needed with regard to how individual situations are perceived. A further major consideration is that of the usefulness of applying conceptual frameworks drawn from classical societies in assessing social complexity in post-Roman Europe.

Editorial Note: Following Baker and Brookes 2013: 37–41, we have attempted to separate archaeological and linguistic usage of the term *burh*/burh in this article. Thus the term is presented in italics whenever it directly reflects Old English terminological usage (for example, where a place is specifically called a *burh* in an Old English source, or where discussion is focused on the element in place-names).

Works Cited

Manuscripts

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 383

Primary Sources

Attenborough, F. L. (ed. and trans.). 1922. *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge)

Colgrave, Bertram (trans.). 1956. *Felix's Life of St Guthlac* (Cambridge)

Colgrave, Bertram, and R. A. B. Mynors (eds). 1969. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford)

Keynes, Simon, and Michael Lapidge (ed. and trans.). 1983. *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth)

Morgan, Philip (ed. and trans.). 1979. *Domesday Book: Berkshire* (Chichester)

Plummer, Charles, and J. Earle. 1892. *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, with Supplementary Extracts from the Others: A Revised Text on the Basis of an Edition by John Earle*, 2 vols (Oxford), I: *Text, Appendices and Glossary*

——, 1899. *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, with Supplementary Extracts from the Others: A Revised Text on the Basis of an Edition by John Earle*, 2 vols (Oxford), II: *Introduction, Notes and Index*

Robertson, Agnes J. (ed. and trans.). 1925. *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I* (Cambridge)

——, 1956. *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (Cambridge)

Stevenson, William Henry (ed.). 1904. *Asser's Life of King Alfred: Together with the Annals of Saint Neots, Erroneously Ascribed to Asser* (Oxford)

Whitelock, Dorothy, David C. Douglas, and Susie I. Tucker (ed. and trans.). 1961. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation* (London)

Winterbottom, Michael (ed. and trans.). 1978. *Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and Other Works* (Chichester)

Secondary Studies

Ager, Barry. 2006. 'Swords', in *Saltwood Funerary Landscape: Early Anglo-Saxon Weapons*, ed. by Barry Ager and others, Channel Tunnel Rail Link Integrated Site Report Series (York), pp. 1–10

Annable, F. Ken, and Bruce N. Eagles. 2010. *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Blacknall Field, Pewsey, Wiltshire*, Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Monographs, 4 (Devizes)

Astill, Grenville. 2006. 'Community, Identity and the Later Anglo-Saxon Town: The Case of Southern England', in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, ed. by Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 15 (Turnhout), pp. 233–54

Aston, Michael. 1986. 'Post-Roman Central Places in Somerset', in *Central Places, Archaeology and History*, ed. by Eric Grant (Sheffield), pp. 49–77

Baker, John, and Stuart Brookes. 2013. *Beyond the Burghal Hidage: Anglo-Saxon Civil Defence in the Viking Age,* (Leiden)

Biddle, Martin. 1976. 'Towns', in *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by David M. Wilson (Cambridge), pp. 99–150

Blackburn, Mark A. S. (ed.). 1986. *Anglo-Saxon Monetary History* (Leicester)

——, 1998. 'The London Mint in the Reign of Alfred', in *Kings, Currency and Alliances: History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century*, ed. by Mark A. S. Blackburn and David N. Dumville (Woodbridge), pp. 105–25

Bone, Peter. 1989. 'The Development of Anglo-Saxon Swords from the Fifth to the Eleventh Century', in *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Sonia Chadwick Hawkes (Oxford), pp. 63–70

Boone, James L. 1992. 'Competition, Conflict, and the Development of Social Hierarchies', in *Evolutionary Ecology and Human Behavior*, ed. by Eric Alden Smith and Bruce Winterhalder (New York), pp. 301–37

Booth, Paul, Champion, T., Garwood, P., Glass, Helen, Munby, J. and Reynolds, Andrew. 2011. *Tracks Through Time: The Archaeology of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link* (Oxford)

Boyd, Robert, and Peter J. Richerson. 2005. *The Origin and Evolution of Cultures* (Oxford)

Bradford, John S. P., and Richard. G. Goodchild. 1939. 'Excavations at Frilford, Berks., 1937–8', *Oxoniensia*, 4, 1–70

Brogiolo, Gian Pietro. 2000. 'Towns, Forts and the Countryside: Archaeological Models for Northern Italy in the Early Lombard Period', in *Towns and their Territories between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Gian Pietro Brogiolo, Neil Christie, and Nancy Gauthier (Leiden), pp. 299–323

Brookes, Stuart. 2007. *Economics and Social Change in Anglo-Saxon Kent, AD 400–900: Landscapes, Communities and Exchange*, British Archaeological Reports, 431 (Oxford)

Brooks, Nicholas P. 1964. 'The Unidentified Forts of the Burghal Hidage', *Medieval Archaeology*, 8, 74–90

Brooks, Nicholas P., and James A. Graham-Campbell. 1986. 'Reflections on the Viking-Age Silver Hoard from Croydon, Surrey', in *Anglo-Saxon Monetary History*, ed. by Mark A. S. Blackburn (Leicester), pp. 91–110

Brown, Michelle P. 1991. 'Alfred and Guthrum's Treaty', in *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture, AD 600–900*, ed. by Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse (London), pp. 267–68

Brugmann, Birte. 1997. 'Sixth-Century Kentish Chronology', in *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery on Mill Hill, Deal, Kent*, ed. by Keith Parfitt and Birte Brugmann, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monographs, 14 (London), pp. 94–102

Carman, John. 1997. 'Approaches to Violence', in *Material Harm: Archaeological Studies of War and Violence*, ed. by John Carman (Glasgow), pp. 1–23

——, 2005. *Sutton Hoo: A Seventh-Century Princely Burial Ground and its Context*, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London, 69 (London)

Castellanos, Santiago, and Iñaki Martín Viso. 2005. 'The Local Articulation of Central Power in the North of the Iberian Peninsula (500–1000)', *Early Medieval Europe*, 13, 1–42

Chagnon, Napoleon A. 1988. 'Life Histories, Blood Revenge, and Warfare in a Tribal Population', *Science*, 239, 985–92

Cohen, Richard. 1978. 'Introduction', in *Origins of the State: The Anthropology of Political Evolution*, ed. by Richard Cohen and Elman R. Service (Philadelphia), pp. 1–20

Cunliffe, Barry W. 1976. *Excavations at Porchester Castle, II: Saxon*, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London, 34 (London)

Crawford, Sally. 1999. *Childhood in Anglo-Saxon England* (Stroud)

Creighton, Oliver, and Robert Liddiard. 2008. 'Fighting Yesterday's Battle: Beyond War or Status in Castle Studies', *Medieval Archaeology*, 52, 161–68

Davidson, Hilda Ellis. 1962. *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge)

Davies, Wendy. 1982. *Wales in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester)

De Meulemeester, J., and K. O'Conor. 2007. 'Fortifications', in *The Archaeology of Medieval Europe, I: Eighth to Twelfth Centuries AD*, ed. by James Graham-Campbell with Magdalena Valor (Århus), pp. 316–41

Dickinson, Tania M., and Heinrich Härke. 1992. *Early Anglo-Saxon Shields* (London)

Dixon, Philip. W. 1979. 'A Neolithic and Iron Age Site on a Hill Top in Southern England', *Scientific American*, 241.5, 42–50

Edwards, Nancy. 1990. *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland* (London)

Evison, Vera I. 1987. *Dover: The Buckland Anglo-Saxon Cemetery* (London)

Fabech, Charlotte. 2006. 'Centrality in Old Norse Mental Landscapes: A Dialogue between Arranged and Natural Places', in *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives*, ed by Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert, and Catharina Raudvere (Lund), pp. 26–32

Farrell, Robert, and Carol Neumann de Vegvar (eds). 1992. *Sutton Hoo: Fifty Years After*, American Early Medieval Studies, 2 (Oxford, OH)

Ferguson, R. Brian. 1984. 'Introduction: Studying War', in *Warfare, Culture, and Environment*, ed. by R. Brian Ferguson (New York), pp. 1–81

Fern, Christopher. 2007. 'Early Anglo-Saxon Horse Burial of the Fifth to Seventh Centuries AD', in *Early Medieval Mortuary Practices*, ed. by Sarah Semple and Howard M. R. Williams, Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History, 14 (Oxford), pp. 92–109

Foard, Glenn. 2009. 'Bosworth Battlefield Survey' <http://www.battlefieldstrust.com/resource-centre/warsoftheroses/battlepageview.asp?pageid=824> [accessed 3 May 2010]

Foster, Sally. 1995. *Picts, Gaels and Scots* (London)

Fox, Richard A. 1993. *Archaeology, History, and Custer's Last Battle* (Norman)

Fox, Richard A., Jr, and Douglas D. Scott. 1991. 'The Post-Civil War Battlefield Pattern', *Historical Archaeology*, 25, 92–103

Geibig, Alfred. 1991. *Beiträge zur morphologischen Entwicklung des Schwertes im Mittelalter* (Neumünster)

Gelling, Margaret. 1976. *The Place-Names of Berkshire, Part III*, English Place-Name Society, 51 (Cambridge)

Graham-Campbell, James. 1989. 'The Archaeology of the Danelaw', in *Les Mondes Normandes (VIIIᵉ–XIIᵉ s.)*, ed. by Henri Galinié (Caen), pp. 69–76

——, 1992. 'Anglo-Scandinavian Equestrian Equipment in Eleventh-Century England', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 14, 77–89

——, 2001. 'Pagan Scandinavian Burial in the Central and Southern Danelaw', in *Vikings and the Danelaw*, ed. by James Graham-Campbell and others (Oxford), pp. 105–23

——, 2004. 'The Archaeology of the 'Great Army' (865–79)', in *Det Tværfaglige Vikinge-symposium: beretning fra attende Århus 2004*, ed. by Else Roesdahl and Jens Peter Schjødt (Århus), pp. 30–46

Greep, S. J. 1987. 'Lead Sling-Shot from Windridge Farm, St Albans and the Use of the Sling by the Roman Army in Britain', *Britannia*, 18, 183–200

Haldon, John F. 2006. 'Introduction: Why Model Logistical Systems?', in *General Issues in the Study of Medieval Logistics: Sources, Problems and Methodologies*, ed. by John F. Haldon, History of Warfare, 36 (Leiden), pp. 1–36

Hall, Richard A. 1984. *The Viking Dig* (London)

Halsall, Guy. 1989. 'Anthropology and the Study of Pre-Conquest Warfare and Society: The Ritual War in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Sonia Chadwick Hawkes (Oxford), pp. 155–77

——, 2003. *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450–900* (London)

——, 2006. 'Villas, Territories and Communities in Merovingian Northern Gaul', in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, ed. by Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 15 (Turnhout), pp. 209–31

Härke, Heinrich. 1990. '"Warrior Graves"? The Background of the Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite', *Past and Present*, 126, 22–43

——, 1992. 'Changing Symbols in a Changing Society: The Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite in the Seventh Century', in *The Age of Sutton Hoo*, ed. by Martin O. H. Carver (Woodbridge), pp. 149–65

Härke, Heinrich, and Roger Entwhistle. 2002. 'An Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial at Tidworth: A Battle Site on Salisbury Plain?', *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, 57, 38–52

Harris, Anthea. 2006. 'Copper-Alloy Bowls', in *Early Anglo-Saxon Vessels and Containers from Saltwood Tunnel*, ed. by Anthea Harris and others, Channel Tunnel Rail Link Integrated Site Report Series (York), pp. 1–9

Hawkes, Sonia Chadwick. 1982. 'Anglo-Saxon Kent, *c.* 425–725', in *Archaeology in Kent to AD 1500*, ed. by P. E. Leach, Council for British Archaeology, Research Report, 48 (London), pp. 64–78

Henderson, George, and Isabel Henderson. 2004. *The Art of the Picts: Sculpture and Metalwork in Early Medieval Scotland* (London)

Hey, Gill. 2004. *Yarnton: Saxon and Medieval Settlement and Landscape; Results of Excavations, 1990–96* (Oxford)

Hill, David H. 1969. 'The Burghal Hidage: The Establishment of a Text', *Medieval Archaeology*, 13, 84–92

——, 1996. 'Appendix IV: Gazetteer of Burghal Hidage Sites', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 189–231

Hill, David H., and Alexander Rumble. 1996. *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (Manchester)

Hills, Catherine. 2007. 'History and Archaeology: The State of Play in Early Medieval Europe', *Antiquity*, 81, 191–200

Hines, John. 1989. 'The Military Context of the adventus Saxonum: Some Continental Evidence', in *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Sonia Chadwick Hawkes (Oxford), pp. 25–48

Hinton, David. 1974. *Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork, 700–1100, in the Department of Antiquities Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford)

Hooper, Bari. 1976. 'The Saxon Burials', in *Excavations at Porchester Castle, Volume II: Saxon*, ed. by Barry W. Cunliffe, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London, 34 (London), pp. 235–61

Horden, Peregrine. 2000. 'The Abrams Test: Ancient and Medieval Cities in Recent Historiography', *Journal of Urban History*, 26, 479–92

Inglemark, Bo E. 1939. 'The Skeletons', in *Armour from the Battle of Wisby, 1361*, ed. by Bengt Thordeman (Stockholm), pp. 149–209

Jessop, Oliver. 1996. 'A New Artefact Typology for the Study of Medieval Arrowheads', *Medieval Archaeology*, 40, 192–205

Jørgensen, Lars, Birger Storgaard, and Lone Gebauer Thomsen (eds). 2003. *The Spoils of Victory: The North in the Shadow of the Roman Empire* (København)

Keynes, Simon. 1998. 'King Alfred and the Mercians', in *Kings, Currency and Alliances: History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century*, ed. by Mark A. S. Blackburn and David N. Dumville (Woodbridge), pp. 1–45

Kobyliński, Zbigniew. 1990. 'Early Medieval Hillforts in Polish Lands in the 6th to the 8th Centuries: Problems of Origins, Function, and Spatial Organization', in *From the Baltic to the Black Sea: Studies in Medieval Archaeology*, ed. by David Austin and Leslie Alcock (London), pp. 147–56

Leahy, Kevin, and Roger Bland. 2009. *The Staffordshire Hoard* (London)

Lewis, Michael J. 2005. *The Archaeological Authority of the Bayeux Tapestry*, British Archaeological Reports British Series, 404 (Oxford)

Maschner, Herbert D. G. 1998. 'The Evolution of Northwest Coast Warfare', in *Troubled Times: Violence and Warfare in the Past*, ed. by Debra Martin and David Frayer (Langhorne), pp. 267–302

Maschner, Herbert D. G., and Katherine L. Reedy-Maschner. 1998. 'Raid, Retreat, Defend (Repeat): The Archaeology and Ethnohistory of Warfare on the North Pacific Rim', *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 17, 19–51

McCann, William (ed.). 1993. *The Fleet Valley Project Interim Report* (London)

Novak, Shannon. 2000. 'Battle-Related Trauma', in *Blood Red Roses: The Archaeology of a Mass Grave from the Battle of Towton, AD 1461*, ed. by Veronica Fiorato, Anthea Boylston, and Christopher Knüsel (Oxford), pp. 90–102

Ohlgren, Thomas H. 1986. *Insular and Anglo-Saxon Illuminated Manuscripts: An Icono-graphic Catalogue, c. A.D. 625 to 1100* (New York)

Otterbein, Keith. F. 2000. 'A History of Research on Warfare in Anthropology', *American Anthropologist*, 101, 794–805

Otto, Ton, Henrik Thrane, and Helle Vandkilde. 2006a. 'Warfare and Society: Archaeo-logical and Social Anthropological Perspectives', in *Warfare and Society: Archaeo-logical and Social Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. by Ton Otto, Henrik Thrane, and Helle Vandkilde (Århus), pp. 9–22

Pantos, Aliki. 2003. 'On the Edge of Things: The Boundary Location of Anglo-Saxon Assembly Sites', in *Boundaries in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. by David Griffiths, Andrew Reynolds, and Sarah Semple, Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History, 12 (Oxford), pp. 38–49

Pedersen, Anne. 2008. 'Viking Weaponry', in *The Viking World*, ed. by Stefan Brink in collaboration with Neil Price (London), pp. 204–11

Pierce, Ian. 2002. *Swords of the Viking Age* (Woodbridge)

Pollard, Tony, and Iain Banks (eds). 2007. *War and Sacrifice: Studies in the Archaeology of Conflict* (Leiden)

Rapoport, David. C. 1971. 'Foreword', in Harry H. Turney-High, *Primitive War: Its Practice and Concepts*, 2nd edn (Columbia, SC), pp. v–xi

Reynolds, Andrew. 1999. *Later Anglo-Saxon England: Life and Landscape* (Stroud)

——, 2005. 'From Pagus to Parish: Territory and Settlement in the Avebury Region from the Late Roman Period to the Domesday Survey', in *The Avebury Landscape: Aspects of the Field Archaeology of the Marlborough Downs*, ed. by Graham Brown, David Field, and David McOmish (Oxford), pp. 164–80

——, 2009a. *Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs* (Oxford)

——, 2009b. 'Meaningful Landscapes: An Early Medieval Perspective', in *Reflections: 50 Years of Medieval Archaeology, 1957–2007*, ed. by Roberta Gilchrist and Andrew Reynolds (Leeds), pp. 409–34

——, 2009c. *The Emergence of Anglo-Saxon Judicial Practice: The Message of the Gallows* (Aberdeen)

Reynolds, Andrew, and Alex Langlands. 2006. 'Social Identities on the Macro Scale: A Maximum View of Wansdyke', in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, ed. by Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 15 (Turnhout), pp. 13–44

Reynolds, Andrew, and Sarah Semple. 2011. 'Anglo-Saxon Non-Funerary Weapon Depositions', in *Studies in Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology: Papers in Honour of Martin G. Welch*, ed. by Stuart Brookes, Sue Harrington, and Andrew Reynolds, British Archaeological Reports, 527 (Oxford), pp. 40–48

Reynolds, Andrew, and T. Williams. Forthcoming. 'Wodnesbeorg 592 and 715 and the Landscape Anthropology of Warfare'

Richardson, Andrew. 2005. *The Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of Kent*, British Archaeological Reports, 391 (Oxford)

Riddler, Ian. 2006. 'The Early Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries', in *The Prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon Funerary Landscape at Saltwood Tunnel, Kent*, ed. by Ian Riddler and

Mike Trevarthen, Channel Tunnel Rail Link Integrated Site Report Series (York), pp. 29–68

Roberts, Jane, and Christian Kay. 1995. *A Thesaurus of Old English*, 2 vols (London)

Sayer, Duncan. 2009. 'Laws, Funerals and Cemetery Organisation: The Seventh-Century Kentish Family', in *Mortuary Practices and Social Identities in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Duncan Sayer and Howard Williams (Exeter), pp. 141–69

Scragg, D. G. 1991. *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991* (Oxford)

Semple, Sarah. 2009. 'Recycling the Past: Ancient Monuments and Changing Meanings in Early Medieval Britain', in *Antiquaries and Archaists: The Past in the Past and the Past in the Present*, ed. by Megan Aldrich and Robert J. Wallis (Reading), pp. 29–45

Shapland, Michael. 2008. 'St Mary's, Broughton, Lincolnshire: A Thegnly Tower-Nave in the Late Anglo-Saxon Landscape', *Archaeological Journal*, 165, 471–519

Sharples, Niall. 1991. *English Heritage Book of Maiden Castle* (London)

Smith, William. 1864. *Latin-English Dictionary* (London)

Stout, Matthew. 1997. *The Irish Ringfort* (Dublin)

Stroud, Gillian. 1993. 'Injury', in *Cemeteries of the Church and Priory of St Andrew, Fishergate*, ed. by Gillian Stroud and Richard L. Kemp (York), pp. 225–41

Stuckert, Caroline. 2010. 'Chapter IV: The Human Remains', in *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Blacknall Field, Pewsey, Wiltshire*, ed. by F. Ken Annable and Bruce N. Eagles, Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Monographs, 4 (Devizes), pp. 111–38

Swanton, Michael James. 1973. *The Spearheads of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (London)

——, 1974. *A Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Spear-Types*, British Archaeological Reports, 7 (Oxford)

Thomas, Gabor. 2008. 'The Symbolic Lives of Late Anglo-Saxon Settlements: A Cellared Structure and Iron Hoard from Bishopstone, East Sussex', *Archaeological Journal*, 165, 334–98

Thompson, Della (ed.). 1995. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford)

Timby, Jane. 1996. *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Empingham II, Rutland: Excavations Carried out Between 1974 and 1975*, Oxbow Monographs, 70 (Oxford)

Turney-High, Harry H. 1971. *Primitive War: Its Practice and Concepts*, 2nd edn (Columbia, SC)

Wakely, Jennifer. 1997. 'Identification and Analysis of Violent and Non-Violent Head Injuries in Osteo-archaeological Material', in *Material Harm: Archaeological Studies of War and Violence*, ed. by John Carman (Glasgow), pp. 24–46

Webster, Leslie. 1991. '250 Sword', in *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture, AD 600–900*, ed. by Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse (London), p. 276

——, 1992. 'Death's Diplomacy: Sutton Hoo in the Light of Other Male Princely Burials', in *Sutton Hoo: Fifty Years After*, ed. by Robert Farrell and Carol Neumann de Vegvar, American Early Medieval Studies, 2 (Oxford, OH), pp. 75–81

Wells, Peter S. 2003. *The Battle that Stopped Rome: Emperor Augustus, Arminius, and the Slaughter of the Legions in the Teutoburg Forest* (New York)

Wenham, Sarah J. 1989. 'Anatomical Interpretations of Anglo-Saxon Weapon Injuries', in *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Sonia Chadwick Hawkes (Oxford), pp. 123–29

Werner, Joachim. 1957. 'Zwei gegossene koptische Bronzeflaschen aus Salona', *Vjesnik za arheologiju I histoij u dalmatinsku*, 59, 115–28

Wheeler, R. E. Mortimer. 1927. *London and the Vikings* (London)

Wilson, David M. 1968. 'Archaeological Evidence for the Viking Settlements and Raids in England', *Frümittelalterliche Studien*, 2, 291–304

——, 1985. *The Bayeux Tapestry* (London)

Wilson, Martin, and Margo Daly. 1985. 'Competitiveness, Risk Taking, and Violence: The Young Male Syndrome', *Ethnology and Sociobiology*, 6, 59–73

Wormald, Patrick. 1994. '*Engla Lond*: The Making of An Allegiance', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 7, 1–24

Wrangham, Richard, and Dale Peterson. 1996. *Demonic Males* (Cambridge, MA)

Yorke, Barbara. 2009. 'The Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms, 600–900, and the Beginnings of the Old English State', in *Der frümittelalterliche Staat – europäische Perspektiven*, ed. by Walter Pohl and Veronika Wieser (Wien), pp. 73–86

Mapping Anglo-Saxon Civil Defence

Stuart Brookes*

Mapping past military landscapes is not a concern new to archaeology. Already in the 1920s, the pioneer of landscape archaeology, O. G. S. Crawford, used methods developed in understanding and visualizing the military geographies of the Western Front during the First World War and applied them to map those of prehistoric Britain, the Roman world, and beyond. It was Crawford's military background that made evident to him the importance that two-dimensional depictions of landscape, in addition to aerial photographs and maps, could play in representing the three-dimensional landscape and the archaeological features contained within it (Crawford 1953: 211). According to Crawford, it is through such maps that we gain understanding about the ways in which elements of landscape interrelate and, moreover, about the wider patterns of history (Hauser 2008: 88). Arguably, there exists an umbilical link between Crawford's ability to *read* archaeological landscapes as palimpsests of past action and his own training in military terrain analysis; that is to say, the ability to understand landscape for strategic and tactical military purposes (O'Sullivan 1991; Woodward 2004: 105). To understand pattern and process in the past, he suggests, one has to adopt the lessons of fieldcraft in order to read the 'face of the land', to identify dominant and hidden features, disturbances, terrain, and gradient, ultimately observing 'every fold in the ground' (Crawford, quoted in Hauser 2008: 65).

Synergies between military and archaeological mapping are all the more relevant when considering actual military geographies of the past. Understanding

---

* The following abbreviation will be used throughout this essay: S (charter number from Sawyer 1968).

Stuart Brookes was Research Associate on the project *Beyond the Burghal Hidage* at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

---

the ways in which military control is exerted over space must take into consideration a wide range of topographical and geographical factors (Maguire 1899); recognition of which has led, indirectly, to the wide-scale adoption of digital technology — such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS) — by military planners the world over (Gaffney 2006: 37–38). Recent studies have used some of the latest digital mapping technologies to address questions in early military history, such as identifying the location of specific battlefields or modelling individual campaigns (Kirgin and Popović 1988; Schlüter 1999; Haldon 2006). The emphasis in these works is on examining the geographical context of armed conflict and military operations; but these same approaches are perhaps even more applicable to questions around past 'militarism', that is, the geographies of military preparedness (Thee 1980: 15; Woodward 2004: 3; Baker and Brookes 2013: 30–31). Rather than attempting to understand the course of individual events, the emphasis here is on understanding the continued preparations which states make for war and the geographical impacts such measures have. Even more than warfare itself, mapping militarism, in this reading, includes alongside the physical structures of defence and intelligence the organization of civic and administrative elements, and the economic, social, and political activities that support military activities during periods of both conflict and non-conflict. These aforementioned aspects are simultaneously linked to the scale and nature of the perceived threat and the pursuit of state security in an economic and ideological sense. A focus on militarism, in other words, can reveal much about the organization and workings of past states.

This essay discusses certain of the transferable methodologies suitable for mapping spatial aspects of militarism during the Viking Age in southern England. Two main research agendas will be outlined: a chronological and typological synthesis of military institutions, and an analysis of systems of defence. These two themes and some of the concepts that accompany them may help to clarify the way we can study conflict in the Viking Age landscape. The main implications of these ideas are: 1) new methods for systematically recording and analysing archaeological landscapes (with an emphasis on visual and modal communications between sites and groups of sites set in their full strategic, economic, social, political, and topographic context); 2) a classificatory system for describing defence structures, to include civil and private defence, and the evolution of defence structures through time; and 3) a framework for developing causal explanations about late Anglo-Saxon civil defence (e.g. border-formation and 'grand strategies'). Preliminary applications of these ideas are outlined as a way of highlighting the potential of these methodologies.

Mapping Militarism

The emergence of territorial states is intimately related to issues of border-for-mation, sovereignty, and monopolies of force. Military geographies can reflect these developments in a number of ways. The form and character of boundaries separating neighbouring states from one another may provide evidence for a range of cross-border relations (social, cultural, military, political, etc.) as well as state responses to these (e.g. Agnew 2003; Houtum, Kramsch, and Zierhofer 2005). Likewise, the ability of the state to impose sovereignty over populations is in part due to its use of violence for political and economic ends (Carneiro 1970; Carneiro 1992; Earle 1991b; Earle 1997), and these institutions and strategies of military control may similarly leave physical traces.

Several observations flow from this. The first observation is that the territorial manifestation of militarism is related to the nature of political authority. To cite one example, in chiefdoms, where power is networked through paramount chiefs or a political elite who retain their position through their ability to access a sufficiently large supply of wealth and services from dependent communities (Carneiro 1981; Earle 1997), the power base is not inherently territorial, and boundaries between neighbouring polities may therefore resemble frontiers or zones rather than precisely defined borders. By contrast the military geographies of states are usually tied to territory, as the process of state formation necessarily involves the superseding of local interests by nationalistic ones (Sahlins 1989: 8; but see Agnew 1998). The defence of territory and the protection of state boundaries are related to geographical formations, which are clearly demarcated and controlled. Therefore the treatment of boundaries between polities can potentially reveal something of the nature of power and authority exerted within them (cf. e.g. Minghi 1963; Prescott 1987; Sahlins 1989; Anderson 1996). The study of boundaries accordingly brings with it a number of empirical and theoretical questions. How are boundaries at different times defined or conceptualized? What cross-boundary pressures existed at different times, and what were the strategic and tactical considerations of border defences? What are the ways in which the iconography of boundaries can be read, and how can these be related to local and national identities?

The second observation concerns the scale of military geographies and chronological change. Military preparedness is specific to particular times and places and will shift and change in response to a range of internal and external factors. Describing military geography therefore requires consideration of a number of important questions: what is the grand strategy of defence? What is being protected and how? How do we define the various elements

of a civil defence landscape? Clearly, underpinning these questions is an issue of scale; a national or regional perspective may require a focus on major sites, military industries, border fortifications, road networks, civilian defence, and other infrastructure for emergency situations; some of these might apply to local defence, others might not. How did the systems of defence operate? This approach to military landscapes by implication draws attention to the links between sites, what we might call 'an archaeology of communications', which in itself requires a range of new methodologies and approaches.

The third observation relates militarism to other social and economic phenomena. How much does military infrastructure represent an isolated operational sphere? How well does civil defence provide for public safety, and who is affected by it? How does militarism relate to administrative landscapes? The military control of space and the activities relating to it, in this sense, carries with it a range of fundamental infrastructural and ideological concerns underpinning statehood. Ostensibly civil defence describes practices and policies that are in the general interest of society, but, particularly in peace time, they also work to support the sectional interests of military authorities charged with organizing it. This dualism of function sees militarism simultaneously tied up with despotic power and the civil sphere. Effective civil defence depends in no small part on the emergence of a 'state ideology' (Yoffee 2005) or 'nationalism' (Giddens 1985: 209–21): it is an articulation of 'general interests'; practices, programmes, and policies designed to appeal to all members of the state, not simply the sectional interests of groups or classes (Giddens 1985: 212). At the same time it aids the processes by which territorial states are defined, thereby potentially shifting the basis of power away from central dominant elites towards territorially organized institutions (Mann 1984). The study of civil defence landscapes in this way can reveal a range of possible ways in which power was organized spatially.

All three observations emphasize the need to regard the military geographies of states as systems, moving the emphasis away from the study of individual sites to explore the relationships between them, and how these together defined particular military spaces tied to various defensive, political, and socioeconomic concerns. This last point has particular relevance for the analysis of early medieval militarism in England, where considerable research, inspired by a tenth-century document known as the Burghal Hidage, has been focused on understanding the organization of civil defence in the time of King Alfred of Wessex (AD 871–99) and his son and successor King Edward the Elder (AD 899–924) (e.g. Brooks 1964; Hill 1969; Hill and Rumble 1996). The Burghal Hidage lists thirty-three major fortifications (often referred to as burhs, though

not designated as such in the document itself), which were apparently designed as part of a strategic system of defence to safeguard West Saxon hegemony (and populations) in southern England. Significant archaeological work has now been carried out on many of the listed burhs, with the latest urban excavations of Anglo-Saxon Malmesbury (Longman 2006), Oxford (Dodd 2003), and Bath (Davenport 2002) all recently synthesized, to which can be added some important publications on the archaeological development of Mercian strongholds (Baker and Holt 2004; Bassett 2007; Bassett 2008; Carver 2010). Whilst this work is fundamental to an understanding of the development of individual sites, it also highlights the need for new, wider studies, looking at all of these major sites as a *group*, set in their full strategic, economic, social, political, and topographic context. In recent years, scholars have attempted to correct this vacuum. Jeremy Haslam (Haslam 2006) has explicitly sought to relate the burghal system to recorded political and military events of the period. Similarly, the project *Beyond the Burghal Hidage* (Baker and Brookes 2013) aims to advance a landscape approach to civil defence which looks, firstly, at regional groupings of sites, attempting to understand how major fortifications functioned as part of more complex defensive networks; and secondly, to bring the full variety of evidence (archaeological, historical, and place-name) to bear on questions of chronology and typology of defensive systems. Such a study of military geographies, comprising systems of sites, facilitates not just an assessment of the comparative origins of military structures but also the complexities of developmental dynamics (how and why systems change over time) and reflexive settlement interaction (for example the effect developing burhs have on each other). It also serves to widen the discussion of military organization beyond major sites to include all of the features recorded archaeologically or hinted at by documents such as the *Rectitudines singularum personarum*, which defines a hierarchy of military roles. The following aims to outline some of the methodologies and approaches the project has adopted in order to address these themes.

Borders and 'grand strategy'

The first observation above has particular relevance to understanding the nature of boundary defence in the early medieval period. Contrasts can be drawn between two essential forms of border: linear earthworks of the eighth and ninth century, such as Offa's and Wat's Dyke on the western edge of the Midlands plain, and that of Wansdyke in northern Wiltshire; and defence-in-

depth, as manifested by the defences detailed in the Burghal Hidage (Haslam 2006). According to the military strategist Edward Luttwak both these systems can be characterized as containing a range of strategic elements that can be understood as functioning together to meet particular threats.

On the available evidence it seems likely that early large-scale linear earthworks were not true borders. To function as such would require the agreed demarcation of territory by neighbouring states, yet all indications suggest that they are the result of unilateral decisions made by the people building them. From a purely military perspective, Luttwak (Luttwak 1976: 68–69) regards such boundaries as playing an important strategic role. They could of course serve as defensive monuments during periods of national confrontation as fallback lines, but their more usual role was in the local and regional control of dynamic borderland communities who moved from conflict to harmony and back again through time. In this sense, they are elements of a wider frontier of political interaction. For this reason they often survive in apparent piecemeal fashion; but nevertheless they can be seen to incorporate natural features, such as woodland, major watercourses, and roads, to define clearly bounded territories. For example the boundary of the Danelaw described in Alfred and Guthrum's treaty names both the River Lea and Watling Street as features used to demarcate areas of rival jurisdiction along a precise dividing line (Davis 1982; Dumville 1992b: 1–14; Wormald 1999: 285–86; Kershaw 2000: 45–46).

Luttwak also makes the point that these types of borders were only one element in a mobile strategy of defence: 'border defences of any kind are normally intended to provide a finite barrier only against a particular kind of threat, whilst absorbing, deflecting, or at least filtering threats greater or lesser in intensity than those against which the system is designed' (Luttwak 1976: 61). The consensus of current research on Offa's Dyke — the largest and most impressive of early medieval strategic defences — suggests that this system was primarily intended to control movement and to provide a finite barrier against small-scale transborder raiding, with the protection of border herding a primary concern (Lavelle 2003: 11; Hill and Worthington 2003: 113–28). The physical barrier with its controlled points in and out of Mercia simultaneously regulated movement across the border and limited the impact of unregulated border crossings. In this view it is likely that these defences, like the Roman *limes* they imitated, were designed to operate in tandem with mobile forces. Archaeological investigations along these earthworks have so far failed to identify evidence for either fixed garrisons or watchtowers built into the barrier elements (Noble 1983; Hill and Worthington 2003). The implication is that these fixed lines of defence served primarily to dissuade, or at least impede,

infiltration across the border. Instead of being able to freely penetrate settled areas, strategic defences could channel persons towards regulated gaps in the barrier, or — in the case of more opportunistic crossings — slow down raiders enough to negate the element of surprise on which small-scale incursions relied (Luttwak 1976: 69). This enabled mobile forces based close to the frontier to meet the threat; furthermore, using the linear defences to contain hit-and-run raiders, whose swift exit depended on being able to return to the original breach (Luttwak 1976: 69). In such circumstances, major rivers, marsh, and dense woodland served just as well as frontier obstacles impeding the movement of livestock. However, in the case of large-scale invasion, these barriers also served a purpose, buying time for the mobilization of larger forces to counter the threat and the withdrawal of non-combatants to refuges.

Territorial defence of this kind therefore supposes a number of further strategic elements: lookouts providing surveillance against infiltration and early warning of large-scale attack; communication systems for the raising and mobilization of forces; and fortresses that could act as refuges and *foci* for armed responses (Luttwak 1976: 66–67). In other circumstances linear defences could also provide the supporting infrastructure for offensive operations beyond the border, providing they were furnished with troop bases and forward routes of communication (Luttwak 1976: 66–67).

Similar concerns are evident for the second type of territorial defence: defence-in-depth. This method is based on the combination of self-contained strongholds with mobile forces deployed between or behind them (Luttwak 1976: 131). Defenders adopting this strategy have the advantage of mutual support between self-contained strongholds and mobile forces in the field.

> If the strongholds are sufficiently resilient to survive attack without requiring the direct support of the mobile forces, if the mobile elements in turn can resist or evade concentrated attacks in the field without needing the shelter of the strongholds, and finally, if the offence must eventually reduce the stronghold to prevail, then the conditions are present for successful defence-in-depth. Sooner or later the offence will be faced by the superior strength of both fixed and mobile elements acting in combination. (Luttwak 1976: 131)

It is precisely this model of defence that has been suggested by numerous scholars to underpin the system described in the Burghal Hidage (e.g. Abels 1988: 74; Haslam 2006: 122; Hill 1981: 85–86). Grand strategies of these kinds were necessarily linked to a wide military landscape of inter-relating defensive elements. It follows that a critical understanding of the form of these elements and the chronology of their development is crucial to assessing late Anglo-Saxon military organization and strategy.

Assessing Military Landscapes

Understanding military preparedness in this way opens up a range of meth-odologies aimed at examining the interconnectedness of various dependent defence features. Attempts to map the range of monuments related to civil defence have suggested that a wealth of field monuments and place-names exist which may have a direct and fundamental bearing on our attempt to model defensive systems. Beyond the major burghal sites archaeology has revealed a number of small forts and strongholds, beacon sites, and lookouts which may be linked in some way to form coherent networks of local and regional defence. Beacon systems existing between major forts have, for example, been proposed in southern Hampshire by Hill and Sharpe (Hill and Sharpe 1997), between Chichester and London by Gower (Gower 2002), and between Yatesbury and Marlborough by Reynolds (Reynolds 1995) (Figure 2.1). Unlike the regular distribution of burghal forts, which appear to have been governed in part by issues of accessibility, the seemingly haphazard spacing of these beacons is determined primarily by inter-visibility. Generally, the pattern of these beacons


Figure 2.1. Composite map of southern England showing the pattern
of beacon networks suggested by previous scholars. Map by S. Brookes.

involves short relays between more than one beacon, rather than long-distance linear chains, suggesting a concern with territorial control rather than communication between two distant points. Localized studies of beacon systems may provide some of the answers to how defence was coordinated between major sites, and simultaneously emphasizes the need to develop methods exploring how these systems were designed and what they intended to achieve.

Fortunately, 'visibility' has been an issue that has received considerable attention in archaeological literature dealing not only with ontological aspects of landscape perception (e.g. Bradley 1998; Tilley 1994), but also with methodological issues surrounding the use of the visibility analyst tools provided by GIS (a survey of which is provided by Lake and Woodman 2003). The latter have addressed a range of problems including questions of whether things are recognizable at distance even if they are visible, or whether there is a reciprocal line of sight, and readers are referred to this literature for more detailed description of the underlying methodological concerns.

Visibility

All of the defensive systems proposed by previous research stress the inter-relationship of visual and modal means of communication between sites, and it is probable that these concerns had a major bearing on the coordination of warfare in the Viking Age. Bonfire beacons are a relatively simple signalling medium relying on the visibility of smoke during daylight and light during the darkness of night to convey predetermined messages. This is an obvious, but important, point. There is little flexibility in the message to be transmitted by beacons, and the adequate response needed to be unambiguous. Of course it is possible that the beacon system was complemented by a supplementary messenger system or other audio or visual means, such as bells and semaphore, to properly express the nature of the impending threat. It is also possible that slightly more complicated messages were delivered through bonfire combinations and by varying the flame colour, but none of these methods are recorded before the Tudor period, and archaeological evidence is inconclusive. Bonfires as an early warning of trouble can, therefore, really serve only a small number of purposes: to bring out numbers of armed civilians, militia, or troops whilst simultaneously readying civilians for flight. Bonfires may also have served a further role in controlling the movement of unauthorized persons or those with a nefarious intent abroad at night (Southern 1990). Beacon use of this kind is a way of policing a territory, perhaps controlling routes and the populations
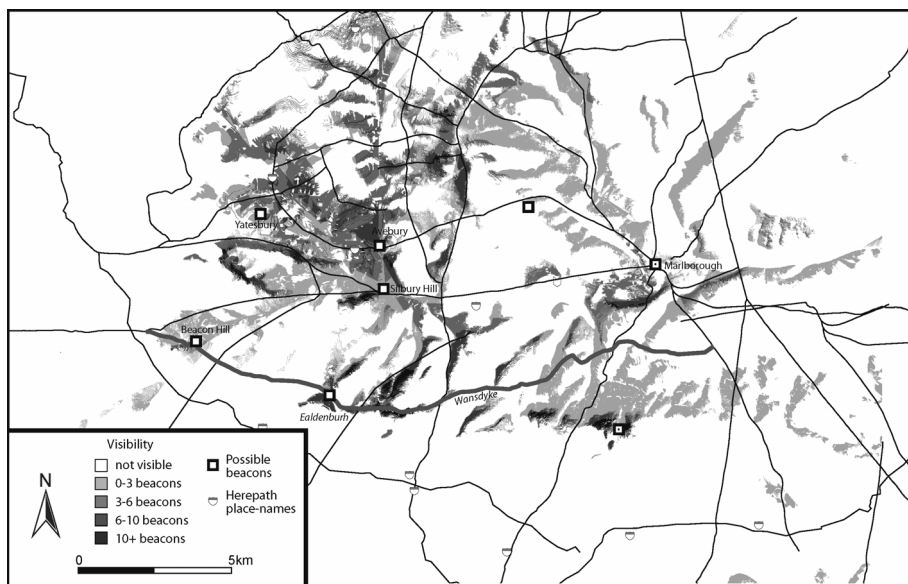
Figure 2.2. Road network in the Avebury region/
Viewsheds of the Avebury region. Map by S. Brookes.

moving along them. In both instances the siting of the beacon has to relate to routeways in order to see and be seen.

A close look at some of the beacon chains proposed by various authors supports this link between beacons and routeways (Figure 2.1). In the system suggested by Hill and Sharpe (Hill and Sharpe 1997) all but two of the putative beacons are linked directly with Roman roads, major inlets, and prehistoric trackways. The system identified by Gower (Gower 2002) is implicitly linked with the Roman road from Chichester to London, and several other proposed networks also correspond well with roads and coastal routes. For example, viewsheds produced for Reynolds's (Reynolds 1995) Silbury beacon system (Figure 2.2) provide near complete coverage of several of the major routes through the area, including the Ridgeway and Barrow Way-Yatesbury Lane. Indeed, large sections of these paths are intervisible with several of the putative beacon sites.

Using this method of overlapping viewsheds it may also be possible to predict the location of other beacon sites in an extended chain. Two sites may be significant: an earthwork named *Ealdenburh* in an authentic charter of AD 903 (S 368) which commands the high ground overlooking Red Shore, the break in the Wansdyke through which the Ridgeway passes, and Morgan's Hill, further

west. It is striking that all these sites are equidistant, at around 6 km apart, perhaps providing evidence of a local network of territorial surveillance existing below the long-distance beacon chains proposed by Hill and Sharpe (Hill and Sharpe 1997).

Topology — Modelling Roads

The link between signalling and routeways suggests another important theme in understanding regional systems: namely the movement of armies themselves. Early medieval warfare, as depicted in contemporary sources, is characterized by movement. Until the late ninth century the advantage in martial conflict almost always lay with the aggressors who were able to exploit their high mobility and tactical acumen to devastating effect. This aspect is particularly evident in ninth-century conflicts which extended over most of England as warbands penetrated far into Anglo-Saxon territories and were able to successfully retreat again, maintaining not only the integrity of their warband, but also often heavily laden with booty.

A nineteenth-century perspective on the strategic demands of this form of warfare is incisive: 'soldiering and fighting are far from synonymous — [...] in a campaign combats are occasional while marching is constant' (Maguire 1899: 20). Accordingly, mobile warfare of this kind appears to have adhered to a few well-known principal routes. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* frequently documents the actions of military forces along coasts and rivers, whilst terrestrial deployment appears often to correlate with the course of Roman roads and other routeways claimed to have their origins in prehistoric times, although their exact origins are unclear. When correlated with military place-name elements, these routeways, fords, and crossings suggest the existence in the Anglo-Saxon period of a well-defined landscape of military movement. The element *here* occurs in place-name compounds mentioned in numerous charters such as *here-ford* (army-ford), *here-pæð* (army-path), *here-weg* (army-way) (see Baker this volume). In law codes — such as those of King Ine of Wessex (AD 688–725) — and other texts *here* is most commonly applied to offensive forces. *Here*-paths and -fords may therefore denote either the purposeful construction of routeways for military endeavours or the suitability of these roads or fords for the passage of an army, both offensive and defensive.

Roads through unfavourable terrain or to the crossing points of rivers formed corridors for the movement of military forces. By designating them as such, writers in Old English may have sought to highlight the likely cam-

paigning routes available to an attacker, but also, correspondingly, the locations where a defensive response could be organized. Key points on these routes may well have been under surveillance, given the evidence for border officials who were charged with challenging new arrivals (Haslam 1989: 164), and it is likely that at least some places containing the Old English elements **tōt(e)* ('a lookout') or *weard* ('a watch, ward, protection') formed an association with such places (Baker and Brookes 2013, 137–214.

Unfortunately, mapping *herepæð*s is extremely difficult. In some cases military terms appear in charter bounds, thereby providing at least one fixed topographical point, but in order to chart the linear route of a *herepæð* a number of additional methods need to be applied. One is to examine the 'topology' of routes. This is determined by two principal methods; firstly, retrogressive analysis, in which cartographic sources are used to remove most recent routeways; and secondly, by determining stratigraphic relationships between routes. In the latter method, the junction of roads can be defined as butting, cutting, or contemporary in order to establish relative relationship to each other (Figure 2.3) (Baxter 1994). Roads butting on to other routes are later in construction whilst cutting relationships are indeterminate. By constructing a matrix of routeway relationships it is thereby possible to determine the relative chronology of road construction.

Phased road networks can be compared with evidence from documentary sources (Figure 2.2). Correlations between stratigraphically 'primary' routes and *here* terms may provide both absolute dates for the existence of routes and also, potentially, the functions of particular routeways. This method of landscape reconstruction has demonstrated the existence of several army roads in northern Wiltshire. One is the already mentioned Barrow Way-Yatesbury Lane route, suggesting the existence of a military road between Marlborough,
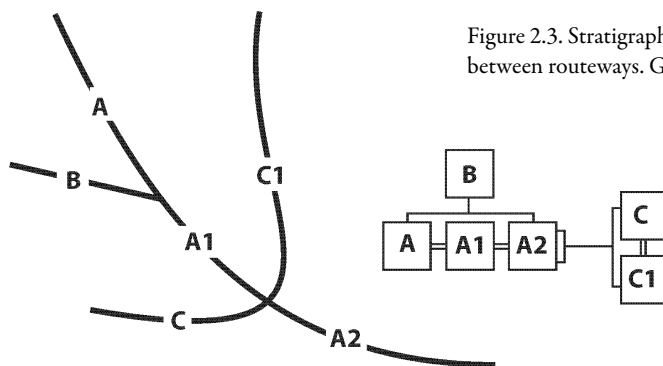
Figure 2.3. Stratigraphical relationships between routeways. Graph by S. Brookes.

Yatesbury, and Barbury. The Ridgeway itself is probably the road named as a *herepæð* in three separate ninth-century charters (S 272; S 449; S 459). Further routes exist between Calne and Marlborough, from Calne to Malmesbury, and linking Calne with Pewsey, skirting between Cannings marsh and the upland Chalk scarp of the Marlborough Downs, passing Beacon Hill, All, and Bishop's Cannings, through *Harepath* Farm in Broad Town and Clyffe Pypard parish before finally joining the *Ealden Walweg* (Workway Drove) to Pewsey (see cover image). (This route may be the *Ealden Holne Weg* in S 272). East of Pewsey this road continues to Burbage before climbing the scarp to Great Bedwyn and Chisbury.

It is striking that several of these routes run parallel to the course of Wansdyke for some distance. It may indeed be possible that sections of these military roads date back to the use of the earthwork as a territorial boundary allowing for the movement of troops through the frontier zone. Alternatively they may have been identified as military ways during the events of 878 or 1010, when the area is known to have been ravaged by the Viking army.

Cost Surface Modelling

It is further possible that a logistical relationship exists between terrain and *herepæð*s. One of the most common examples of GIS applications is to evaluate the variable cost of moving upslope and downslope over a digital elevation model. A GIS can evaluate the cumulative travel effort by multiplying the linear distance between two points by the friction values for each land unit crossed, as defined by slope, aspect, or as a function of other existing dataset(s) such as vegetation cover, wetland, group size, and so forth. In order to examine the relative cost of moving through northern Wiltshire 1:10000 OS Landform data were used to construct a ten-metre ground resolution digital terrain model. Following the methods developed by Bell and Lock (Bell and Lock 2000: 86–96) and Bellavia (Bellavia 2006: 191–94) the tangent of all slopes on this model were then calculated and divided by the tangent of one degree in order to establish a workable cost surface. In order to factor into this model the preexistence of surfaced Roman roads, a mathematical transformation was applied, so that movement along roads incurred half of the cost of off-path travel. This final cost surface formed the mathematical core of our least cost path analyses, with which were measured the relative effort of travelling between any two points in the region.

From the starting point of the AD 878 Viking camp at Chippenham a number of anisotropic cost-paths were calculated to putative 'targets' in the Kennet
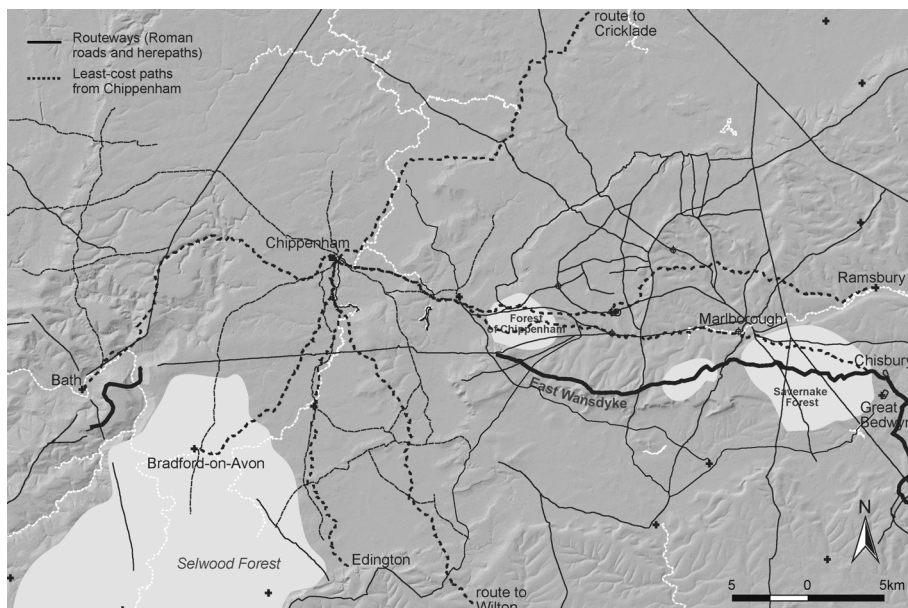
Figure 2.4. Least-cost path routes from Chippenham. Map by S. Brookes.

region, such as minsters and major settlements (Figure 2.4). Significantly, the most easily traversed paths from Chippenham to Ramsbury and Chippenham to Chisbury correlate closely along much of their journey with routeways identified from route topology. *Herepæð*s, perhaps unsurprisingly, appear to stick closely to those routes in landscapes that provide the least obstacles to moving armies. This close correspondence lends credence to the idea of a Yatesbury-Silbury Hill-Avebury defence system. However, rather than a linear frontier dividing the Marlborough Downs and Salisbury Plain, this system may be designed to block west-east movement onto the Downs from the Bristol Avon valley; the clearest historical context for this threat being the events of AD 878.

GIS approaches such as these can provide important methodologies allowing for the visualization of military geographies in the Viking Age. It is against the background of communications, logistics, and mobilization that researchers will be better able to address questions regarding the course of events as they occur in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and other sources (cf. also Haldon 2006). However, exploring military landscapes in this way has more significant impacts than simply understanding the geographies of armed conflict: militarism's affect on wider economic, social, environmental, and cultural geographies can also be assessed.

National Systems

At the national scale it is possible that the Burghal Hidage reveals a number of different systems, potentially tied to stages in the Viking conflict. As others have noted (Hill 1981: 85–86) there are a number of different fortifications used in the system of Wessex defence, including Iron Age hill-forts, Roman towns and forts, as well as newly defended sites. Whilst it is possible that this variety is a product simply of military expedience, it may also be that the Burghal Hidage disguises a number of tell-tale dynamics leading to the foundation of the burghal system.

Taken as a group there is a degree of spatial coherence to the basic fortification types mentioned in the Burghal Hidage (Figure 2.5). In the Wessex heartlands of the southwest counties the primary clustering of so-called 'emergency burhs' can be seen, seemingly those places where the local population could defend themselves in times of crisis. This function is clearest in Somerset, where Burghal Hidage forts existed next to other ecclesiastical and royal centres. Examples of this phenomenon include the pairing of the minster and shire centre of Somerton and the neighbouring fort at Langport, or the pairing of the minster and royal estate of Cheddar beside the fort at Axbridge, or Athelney, and Lyng (Aston 1984: 196–200). Similarly, elsewhere in the southwest burhs utilizing prehistoric hill-forts such as Pilton, Halwell, or Chisbury
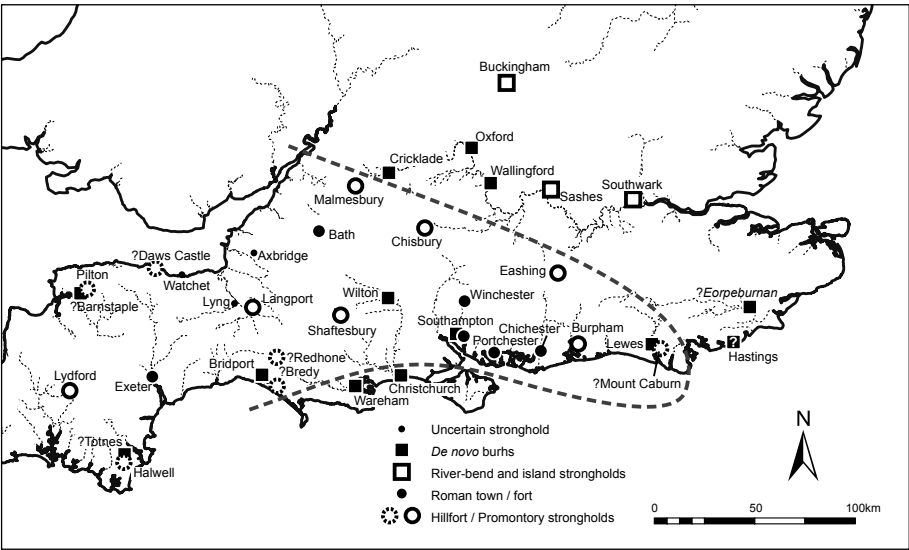

Figure 2.5. Map of Burghal Hidage strongholds. Map by S. Brookes.

are also unlikely to have been intended as permanent settlements and are probably interpreted more correctly as temporary refuges for the surrounding countryside. These fortifications may date back to an older system of civil defence and in some ways may make sense of Alfred's retreat to Athelney in AD 878. Significantly Athelney has in its hinterland the greatest number of hundred meeting places of any of the burhs, and it may have been this central position within a network of local administration that determined Alfred's decision to go there. These older fortifications may have survived into the Burghal Hidage simply because the economic and administrative system on which they relied remained essentially unaffected by conflict with the Vikings.

However, in this zone some attempts were also made to defend existing centres of authority, such as minsters and royal centres, particularly in the refurbishment of Roman town circuits, and the reuse of Roman forts. A number of promontory locations are used for burhs, such as at Malmesbury, Lydford, and Shaftesbury, apparently continuing a tradition of defence based on inaccessibility and topographical utility. Potentially, these Roman towns and promontory sites represent the first attempts to centralize military, administrative, and economic functions at a single site.

In contrast with this pattern in the south-west, around the edges of this zone is a separate area in which all of the classic *de novo* burhs are clustered; settlements based on a regular plan form of streets and plots contained within characteristic defensive circuits (Biddle and Hill 1971). These sites, such as Wareham, Wallingford, Cricklade (and probably Lewes, Southampton, and *Lundenburh*), appear to conform to a different policy of offensive defence. They appear on the edges of the West Saxon kingdom, including along the Thames, and seem to be more strategically located on major waterways, and coastal landing places, in order to restrict movement into and around southern England.

Classifying Fortifications

This impression of late Saxon civil defence emphasizes change and innovation in the formation of systems, responding to the shifting military environment of the ninth to eleventh centuries. However, archaeology is only now beginning to adequately define the range of defensive institutions existing at different times during this longer time frame. Earthen enclosures and rectilinear planning are now known from a whole range of sites — not just early burhs — and dating in some cases as far back as the Middle Saxon period, thereby blurring somewhat many of the distinctions made between civil and private defence.

Important methodologies exist that allow for the triangulation of archaeology, historical events, and numismatic data in order to date the origins of individual burhs. An important approach is that of 'plan analysis' (or 'urban tissue survey'), which can provide important information on the morphogenesis of early settlements, including burhs (Conzen 1960; Lilley 2000). Plan analysis is a method whereby the development of a town's plan form is assessed by defining morphologically distinct plan units based on the patterns of streets, buildings, and plots (Conzen 1960: 3–5; Lilley 2000: 8–9). Plan units can in turn be dated through a combination of archaeological and historical evidence. Key applications of this approach have revealed the late Anglo-Saxon plan forms of a number of sites, including Marlborough (Haslam 1984), London (Milne 1990), and Avebury (Reynolds 2001). Whilst the methodology of plan analysis has a long tradition in urban geography, the recent compilation of Extensive Urban Surveys and Urban Archaeology Databases for a number of towns now potentially provides a great deal of additional archaeological information on which to hang plan form phases.[1]

The shape and character of settlement as revealed by plan analysis can also be studied comparatively, and this has led to a widening of the debate on the morphology of later Anglo-Saxon settlement. Characterization on the basis of enclosure size, as has been undertaken by Reynolds (Reynolds 2003), provides a starting point for ordering sites on a sliding scale of outlay. One assumption which could — at least theoretically — be made is that a relationship exists between the length of a settlement's defences and its relative military burden. Evidence for this is provided by David Hill's influential thesis (Hill 1981: 85), suggesting that the length of the burghal defences correlates in many cases with the hidage assessment figure in the Burghal Hidage when using the formula in the Nowell transcript. Bearing in mind Brooks's important critique of some of the assumptions Hill has made and several errors which have crept into his calculations (Brooks 1996: 128–32), it is nevertheless likely — as Brooks concedes (Brooks 1996: 132) — that the size and garrison of a fortification was in some way correlated with the existing hidage system. It remains to be seen whether we can correlate the size of defensive works directly with particular threats, from thieves and small brigand bands to major military strategies, but it is clear there are several groups of sites sharing similar morphological characteristics, perhaps related to status, evident in the archaeological and historical record.

[1] *Archaeology Data Service: Extensive Urban Survey Programme Overview*, available online at <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/EUS/> [accessed 23 March 2013].

Thus manorial or thegnly residences such as the late tenth-/early eleventh-century enclosures excavated at Trowbridge and Faccombe Netherton both exceed in size (and presumably hidation) the Burghal Hidage assessments of Lyng, Lydford, and Southampton, whilst the larger Goltho period 5 enclosure, again of a tenth-/eleventh-century date, is close in size to Halwell and *Eorpeburnan*. Indeed, the actual size of the Lydford and Lyng defences, at around 300 m, is broadly comparable with Goltho period 5 and its 337 m circuit. Together these sites appear to form a coherent group of enclosed manorial centres containing hall-building complexes and often with associated extra-enclosure chapels.

Of a different order of magnitude Reynolds's major settlement modules, such as the minster enclosures of places such as Bampton, Bisley, and Lambourn, and the secular ovoid enclosures of Barton-on-Humber and Puxton, represent archaeological examples of five-hundred-hide fortifications, equivalent to Burghal Hidage sites such as Hastings, Portchester, and Watchet (Figure 2.6). The Barton-on-Humber enclosure circuit is dated to the ninth century or earlier, and is almost 629 m in length, requiring almost exactly five hundred hides for their upkeep. Almost identical in size, the length of Portchester's fort ditch is only 8 m longer. Significantly both Barton-on-Humber and Portchester are also commonly cited for their masonry towers, and it may well be that this class of enclosure represents important royal thegns charged with wide-reaching civil defence duties beyond the remit of other local lords. Perhaps supporting this idea, the four hundred- to eight hundred-hide burhs of the Burghal Hidage form a particularly well-spaced group of sites generally located on the exposed southern coastline.

At a higher end of the scale we are able to calculate the likely circuits, and the equivalent hides required for their upkeep, of several putative bughal towns. Of these Avebury (at 840 hides) and Marlborough (at 960) are comparable with the Burghal Hidage assessments for places such as Bridport (760) and Bath (1000), but also the late tenth-/early eleventh-century emergency burhs of Old Sarum (834 hides) and South Cadbury (811). Right at the top sit several high-order settlements, roughly twice the size of these late planned burhs. These include *Lundenburg*, the central planned core of which comprises an area of some 2400 m or 1925 hides; significantly not far exceeding that entered in the Burghal Hidage assessment for Southwark at 1800; and Canterbury where the 2760 m of Roman walls equate to nearly 2200 hides.
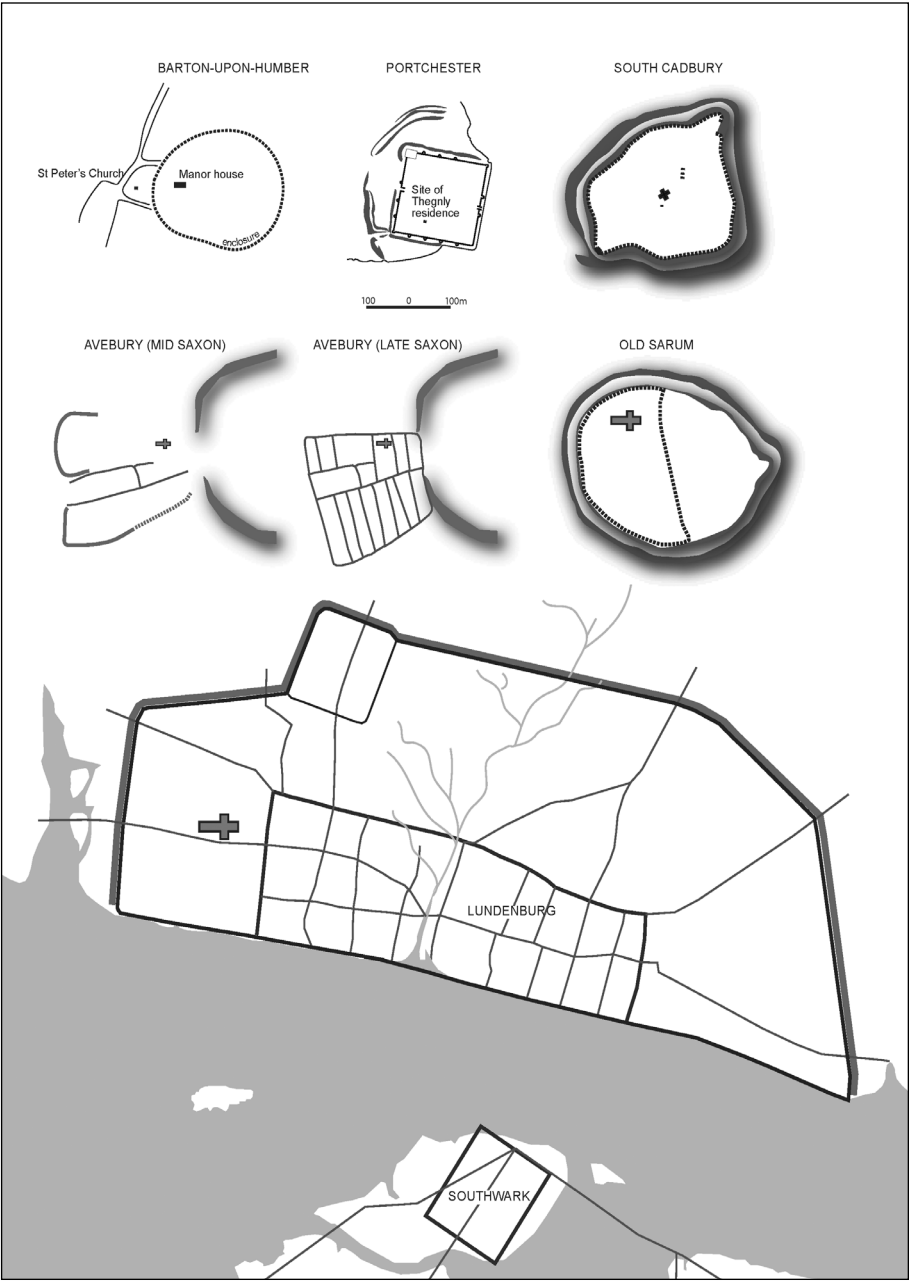
Figure 2.6. Comparative plans of late Anglo-Saxon strongholds.
Map by S. Brookes.

Conclusions

Systematic study of groups of sites, including the classification and interpretation of a whole range of site-types, suggests the existence of a number of networked systems of functionally supporting institutions, including major burhs, manorial enclosures, routeways, and beacon sites. This military geography of later Anglo-Saxon England was shaped by long-term patterns of conflict. At times these seem to have come together as hierarchically and strategically ordered systems of defence controlling key lines of engagement and nodal points in the landscape. At other times and places there may have been relatively weak centrality and temporary ranking between them. These trends may well be chronological as well as spatial. The dispersed sites of Somerset suggest that the origins of the burhs may lie in a heterarchical settlement organization where functions were not centralized at a single site. However, by the tenth/ eleventh century defence comprised a range of hierarchically organized sites from burhs to manorial centres.

As part of this trend some archaeological indications suggest a change taking place in the organization of civil defence over the ninth to eleventh centuries, perhaps most clearly visible in areas outside the centrally administered core of Wessex. In Kent, with the exception of the failed *Eorpeburnan*, civil urban defences at Canterbury and Rochester appear only to have been supplemented by lower-order sites in the later tenth century. The overriding impression from written and archaeological evidence is that it was only at this time that strategically important sites such as Dover, Sandwich, Hythe, and New Romney saw significant investment in rectilinear planning, defence works, and — in the case of Dover at least — long-range signalling capabilities (Baker and Brookes 2013, 335–80). This trend appears to represent a significant shift from the protection of major institutions to a more coherent policy of territorial defence, in which it is likely that military power was delegated to a more local level.

The same process may have characterized Wessex in the late ninth century (Figure 2.7). Here, in the early Viking period, the emphasis appears to be placed on the defence of single settlements, whether 'emergency burhs', manorial stockades, or minster enclosures, behind a largely permeable frontier. But by the tenth century the emphasis had shifted to establishing blocks of settlements around strategic and tactical considerations, such as locations on major inlets and waterways, and systems for maintaining visual contact between settlements (Baker and Brookes 2013, 397–400).

This discussion has focused almost exclusively on the military-political domain — the *Geopolitik* — of states; a perspective which is not unproblematic
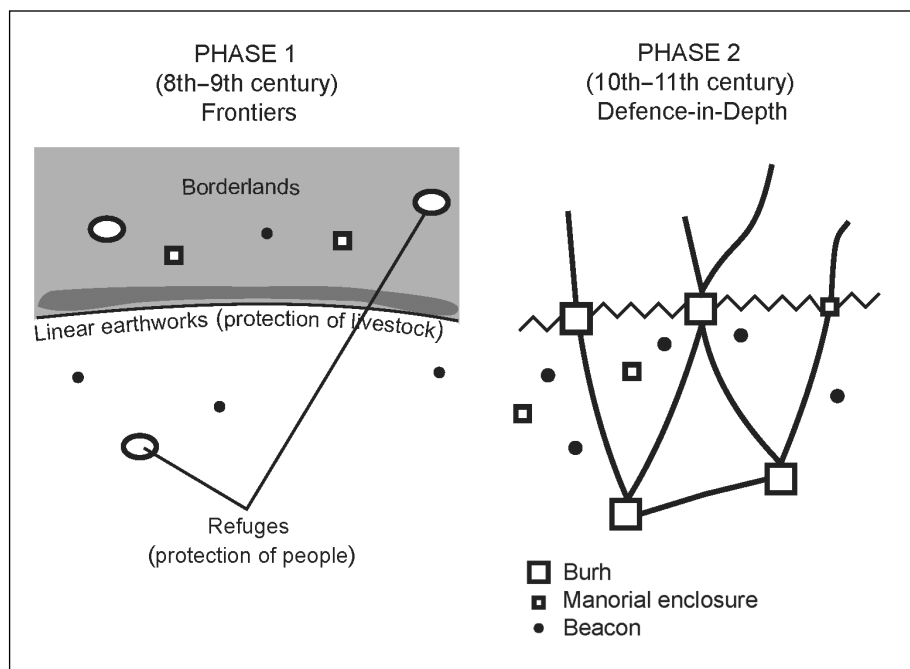
Figure 2.7. A model of the evolution of West Saxon defence. Figure by S. Brookes.

in political science (O'Loughlin and Heske 1991). Nevertheless, to neglect the military rationale of these sites and their geographies is to ignore the major underlying dynamic impacting on settlement structure. Consideration must also be given to invisible landscapes of military power. The existence of a range of military sites such as have been described here could only be achievable through a hugely efficient taxation system and no small amount of ideological coercion. In order to centralize and consolidate power in this way leaders 'must have a nationalistic vision, a symbolic matrix that mobilizes support, legitimizes rule, and, ostensibly, binds the people of the country together' (Ferguson and Whitehead 2000: xix). Civil defence relates to the processes by which the political claims of the elite can be reified as naturalizing myths about the world as it is. In light of their strategic and functional character, early medieval linear earthworks in this analysis could be read as an expression of socio-territorial ambition. They were not a product of territorial states but part of the process of state formation. Only with the development of defence-in-depth was a more territorial approach to civil defence established.

Hand-in-hand with this development is the emergence of ideologies encompassing ideas such as 'paternalism', 'national security', and 'nationalism' (Woodward 2004: 36; Giddens 1985). The sense of cultural unity encouraged by these ideas set in place an opposition between competing interests and identities with English Christendom on one side and Scandinavian heathendom on the other (Campbell 1995). Certainly, contrasts can be drawn between West Saxon civil defence around AD 900, focusing on territory and on maintaining the integrity of the kingdom, and Viking policy, where most of the infrastructure remained close to the host, and the main military objectives were to guarantee the continued position in power of the warrior elite. If this is indeed the case, and this very broad-brush summary of some of the features of the Anglo-Saxon military landscape gives us some indication that it might be, Alfred's achievement thus appears to lie in creating — for the first time — a political psychology that underpinned the establishment of a political territory of England.

Works Cited

Secondary Studies

Abels, Richard P. 1988. *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley)

Agnew, John A. 1998. *Geopolitics: Re-Visioning World Politics* (London)

——, 2003. 'Territoriality and Political Identity in Europe', in *Europe without Borders: Remapping Territory, Citizenship and Identity in a Transnational Age*, ed. by Mabel Berezin and Martin Schain (Baltimore), pp. 219–42

Anderson, Malcolm. 1996. *Frontiers: Territory and State in the Modern World* (Cambridge)

Aston, Michael. 1984. 'The Towns of Somerset', in *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England*, ed. by Jeremy Haslam (Chichester), pp. 167–201

Baker, Nigel, and Richard Holt. 2004. *Urban Growth and the Medieval Church: Gloucester and Worcester* (Aldershot)

Baker, John, and Stuart Brookes. 2013. *Beyond the Burghal Hidage: Anglo-Saxon Civil Defence in the Viking Age,* (Leiden)

Bassett, Steven. 2007. 'Divide and Rule? The Military Infrastructure of Eighth- and Ninth-Century Mercia', *Early Medieval Europe*, 15, 53–85

——, 2008. 'The Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon Defences of Western Mercian Towns', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 15, 180–239

Baxter, A. 1994. 'Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Central North Wiltshire: A Study of Communications and Settlements in the Landscape' (unpublished bachelor's dissertation, University College London)

Bell, Tyler, and Gary Lock. 2000. 'Topographic and Cultural Influences on Walking the Ridgeway in Later Prehistoric Times', in *Beyond the Map: Archaeology and Spatial Technologies*, ed. by Gary Lock (Amsterdam), pp. 85–100

Bellavia, Gino. 2006. 'Predicting Communication Routes', in *General Issues in the Study of Medieval Logistics: Sources, Problems and Methodologies*, ed. by John F. Haldon, History of Warfare, 36 (Leiden), pp. 185–98

Biddle, Martin, and David H. Hill. 1971. 'Late Saxon Planned Towns', *Antiquaries Journal*, 51, 70–85

Bradley, Richard. 1998. *The Significance of Monuments: On the Shaping of Human Experience in Neolithic and Bronze Age Europe* (London)

Brooks, Nicholas P. 1964. 'The Unidentified Forts of the Burghal Hidage', *Medieval Archaeology*, 8, 74–90

——, 1996. 'The Administrative Background to the Burghal Hidage', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 128–50

Campbell, James. 1995. 'The United Kingdom of England: The Anglo-Saxon Achievement', in *Uniting the Kingdom?*, ed. by Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer (London), pp. 31–47

Carneiro, R. L. 1970. 'A Theory of the Origin of the State', *Science*, n.s., 169, 733–38

——, 1981. 'The Chiefdom: Precursor of the State', in *The Transition to Statehood in the New Worlds*, ed. by Grant D. Jones and Robert R. Kautz (Cambridge), pp. 37–79

——, 1992. 'The Role of Warfare in Political Evolution: Past Results and Future Projections', in *Effects of War on Society*, ed. by Giorgio Ausenda (San Marino), pp. 87–102

Carver, Martin. 2010. *The Birth of a Borough: An Archaeological Study of Anglo-Saxon Stafford* (Woodbridge)

Chapman, John C. (ed.). 1988. *Recent Developments in Yugoslav Archaeology* (Oxford)

Conzen, Michael R. G. 1960. *Alnwick, Northumberland: A Study in Town Plan Analysis*, Institute of British Geographers Publications, 27 (London)

Crawford, Osbert G. S. 1953. *Archaeology in the Field* (London)

Davenport, Peter. 2002. *Medieval Bath Uncovered* (Stroud)

Davis, Ralph Henry Carless. 1982. 'Alfred and Guthrum's Frontier', *English Historical Review*, 97, 803–10

Dodd, Anne (ed.). 2003. *Oxford before the University: The Late Saxon and Norman Archaeology of the Thames Crossing, the Defences and the Town*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monographs, 17 (Oxford)

Dumville, David (ed.). 1992a. *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural and Ecclesiastical Revival* (Woodbridge)

——, 1992b. 'The Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum', in *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar*, ed. by David Dumville (Woodbridge), pp. 1–28

Earle, Timothy (ed.). 1991a. *Chiefdoms: Power, Economy and Ideology* (Cambridge)

——, 1991b. 'The Evolution of Chiefdoms', in *Chiefdoms: Power, Economy and Ideology*, ed. by Timothy Earle (Cambridge), pp. 1–15

——, 1997. *How Chiefs Come to Power* (Stanford)

Ferguson, R. Brian, and Neil L. Whitehead (eds). 2000. *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare* (Oxford)

Gaffney, Vince. 2006. 'Who's in Command Here? The Digital Basis of Historical Military Logistics', in *General Issues in the Study of Medieval Logistics: Sources, Problems and Methodologies*, ed. by John F. Haldon, History of Warfare, 36 (Leiden), pp. 37–68

Giddens, Anthony. 1985. *The Nation-State and Violence* (Cambridge)

Gower, Graham. 2002. 'A Suggested Anglo-Saxon Signalling Station between Chichester and London', *London Archaeologist*, 10, 59–63

Haldon, John F. 2006. 'Introduction: Why Model Logistical Systems?', in *General Issues in the Study of Medieval Logistics: Sources, Problems and Methodologies*, ed. by John F. Haldon, History of Warfare, 36 (Leiden), pp. 1–36

Haslam, Jeremy. 1989. 'Anthropology and the Study of Pre-Conquest Warfare and Society: The Ritual War in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Sonia Chadwick Hawkes (Oxford), pp. 155–77

——, 1984. 'The Towns of Wiltshire', in *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England*, ed. by Jeremy Haslam (Chichester), pp. 87–147

——, 2006. 'King Alfred and the Vikings: Strategies and Tactics, 876–886 AD', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 13, 122–54

Hauser, Kitty. 2008. *Bloody Old Britain* (London)

Hill, David H. 1969. 'The Burghal Hidage: The Establishment of a Text', *Medieval Archaeology*, 13, 84–92

——, 1981. *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford)

Hill, David H., and Alexander Rumble. 1996. *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (Manchester)

Hill, David H., and Sheila Sharpe. 1997. 'An Anglo-Saxon Beacon System', in *Names, Places & People: An Onomastic Miscellany in Memory of John McNeal Dodgson*, ed. by Alexander Rumble and David Mills (Stamford), pp. 97–108

Hill, David H., and Margaret Worthington. 2003. *Offa's Dyke: History & Guide* (Stroud)

Houtum, Henk van, Oliver Kramsch, and Wolfgang Zierhofer (eds). 2005. *B/ordering Space* (Aldershot)

Kershaw, Paul. 2000. 'The Alfred-Guthrum Treaty: Scripting Accommodation and Interaction in Viking-Age England', in *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 2 (Turnhout), pp. 43–64

Kirgin, Branko, and Petar Popović. 1988. 'Maslinovik — a Greek Watch Tower in the *chora* of Pharos: A Preliminary Report', in *Recent Developments in Yugoslav Archaeology*, ed. by John C. Chapman (Oxford), pp. 177–89

Lake, Mark W., and Paddy E. Woodman. 2003. 'Visibility Studies in Archaeology: A Review and Case Study', *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 30, 689–707

Lavelle, Ryan. 2003. *Fortifications in Wessex, c. 800–1066* (Oxford)

Lilley, Keith D. 2000. 'Mapping the Medieval City: Plan Analysis and Urban History', *Urban History*, 27, 5–30

Longman, Tim. 2006. 'Iron Age and Later Defences at Malmesbury: Excavations 1998–2000', *Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Magazine*, 99, 104–64

Luttwak, Edward N. 1976. *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third* (New York)

Maguire, Thomas Miller. 1899. *Outlines of Military Geography* (Cambridge)

Mann, Michael. 1984. 'The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results', *European Journal of Sociology*, 25, 185–213

Milne, Gustav. 1990. 'King Alfred's Plan for London?', *London Archaeologist*, 6, 206–07

Minghi, Julian. 1963. 'Boundary Studies in Political Geography', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 53, 407–28

Noble, Frank. 1983. *Offa's Dyke Reviewed* (Oxford)

O'Loughlin, John, and Henning Heske. 1991. 'From "Geopolitik" to "Geopolitique": Converting a Discipline for War to a Discipline for Peace', in *The Political Geography of Conflict and Peace*, ed. by Nurit Kliot and Stanley Waterman (London), pp. 37–59

O'Sullivan, Patrick. 1991. *Terrain and Tactics* (New York)

Prescott, John R. V. 1987. *Political Frontiers and Boundaries* (London)

Reynolds, Andrew. 1995. 'Avebury, Yatesbury and the Archaeology of Communications', *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, 6, 21–30

——, 2001. 'Avebury: A Late Anglo-Saxon *burh*?', *Antiquity*, 75, 29–30

——, 2003. 'Boundaries and Settlements in Later Sixth- to Eleventh-Century England', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 12, 98–136

Sahlins, Peter. 1989. *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley)

Sawyer, Peter. 1968. *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks, 8 (London)

Schlüter, Wolfgang. 1999. 'The Battle of the Teutoburg Forest: Archaeological Research at Kalkriese near Osnabrück', in *Roman Germany: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. by J. D. Creighton and Roger J. A. Wilson (Portsmouth), pp. 125–59

Shapland, Michael. 2005. 'Towers of Strength: The Role of Churches in the Defence of the Late Anglo-Saxon Landscape' (unpublished bachelor's dissertation, University College London)

Shemming, Jake, and Keith Briggs. 2006. 'Anglo-Saxon Communication Networks', <http://keithbriggs.info/AS_networks.html> [accessed May 2006]

Southern, Pat. 1990. 'Signals Versus Illumination on Roman Frontiers', *Britannia*, 21, 233–42

Thee, Marek. 1980. 'Militarism and Militarization in Contemporary International Relations', in *Problems in Contemporary Militarism*, ed. by Eide Adbjørn and Marek Thee (London), pp. 15–35

Tilley, Christopher. 1994. *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Paths, Places and Monuments* (Oxford)

Woodward, Rachel. 2004. *Military Geographies* (Oxford)

Wormald, Patrick. 1999. *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, I: Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford)

Yoffee, Norman. 2005. *Myths of the Archaic State* (Cambridge)

The Language of Anglo-Saxon Defence

John Baker*

A key aspect of late Anglo-Saxon military effectiveness was the organization of defence. As well as the major documented defended sites, such as those outlined in the Burghal Hidage, it seems probable that a logistical system for the provision of soldiers and supplies to these places also existed, along with a strategic network of signalling posts to give warning of approaching attack. In order to understand the defensive sites within their landscape context, and indeed late Anglo-Saxon military organization as a whole, identification of the component parts of the system that underpinned them is required. To that end, it is necessary to examine how the language used to describe such defensive structures appears in the landscape, and to what

John Baker was Research Associate on the project *Beyond the Burghal Hidage* at the University of Nottingham.

extent military sites can be detected through the record left by place-names. This approach raises a number of issues regarding the potential for place-names to contribute to landscape projects of a multidisciplinary nature.

Often in the past, toponymic attempts to locate defensive networks have, not unreasonably, focused on places with the generic *burh* 'stronghold (with a wall or rampart)' (Parsons and Styles 2000: 74). After all, strongholds are an important feature of military organization. These attempts have varied in detail and complexity, from the association of certain types of *burh* name with only partially understood periods of conflict,[1] to more complex analyses of networks of possible *burh* names and their spatial relationships with other terms suggestive of military activity, such as lookouts and beacons. In some cases, closely defined periods of time have been assigned to such networks. Smith (Smith 1962: 46 n. 2), for example, in considering the *burh* place-names of south Yorkshire, felt that they formed a coherent line of defence probably dating to the early tenth century.[2] The interpretation of the individual place-names provided the grounds for such an assertion. For example, several of them seemed to contain Old Norse elements or personal names,[3] showing that these place-names cannot have come into being before the late ninth century. On the other hand, Conisbrough (South Yorkshire), 'the king's *burh*', must have been coined a good time before its first documented use at the beginning of the eleventh

---

[1] For example, the editors of *The Place-Names of Devon* made a brief suggestion that a group of names made up of Brittonic first elements and the generic *burh* might represent the last strongholds of British inhabitants in the face of the Anglo-Saxon advance — that is to say, the places that held out long enough for their Brittonic place-names to be learnt by the new, non-Brittonic population (Gover, Mawer, and Stenton 1931: xxiii).

[2] Goodall associates the place-name 'Conisbrough' with Ecgberht's visit to Dore to receive the submission of the Northumbrians (Goodall 1914: 106), but Smith preferred to associate the fortifications with the strengthening of northern defences by Æthelflæd. Higham has also made a link between the presence of so many *burh* names and a possible frontier zone, but thinks it unlikely that the Don formed the frontier, noting ASC entries for 827 and 942 that seem to place the border between Mercia and Northumbria nearer to Dore (South Yorkshire) (Higham 2006: 407–08).

[3] In some instances it is hard to tell if the elements are actually ON or Scandinavianized forms of OE words. Kexbrough (South Yorkshire) contains an ON personal name *Keptr* (gen. sg. *Kepts*); Mexborough (South Yorkshire) might contain an OE personal name **Mēoc* or an ON personal name **Mīuk*. Conisbrough has an ON, or at the very least a Scandinavianized, first element (ON *konung* perhaps substituting for OE *cyning*). Stainbrough (South Yorkshire) also shows influence of ON speakers, OE *stān* being replaced by ON *steinn* (Smith 1961a: 77, 125, 312, 318).

century, when it was certainly not in the possession of the king.[4] Of course, this method of dating the system only works if all those places did actually form part of a coherent network, set up in one go, and if their place-names were first coined at the same time as the creation of the system. It should be noted that no record of them exists before the eleventh century and some are not documented until much later than that.

More recently, Cox (Cox 1994a: xxxiii–xxxvii; Cox 1994b; Cox 1996) has discussed, in greater detail, the possibility of defensive systems around a putative early Anglo-Saxon territory roughly coterminous with modern Rutland and along the coastal and inland frontiers of the early kingdom of Lindsey. Cox also gives thought to the landscape context of these possible networks, considering not only likely strongholds but place-names denoting observation sites and military route ways. Nevertheless, the problem with this and other such attempts (and it is a problem acknowledged by the scholars concerned), is that without archaeological evidence, it is virtually impossible to say, with much certainty, that any individual *burh* site was used at a given period, let alone that a network of *burh* sites was set up at a single stage as part of a coherent defensive system. Aware of this problem, Cox has tried to find archaeological support for his defensive circuits, but the proposed period for his suggested networks — indeed their coherence as defensive systems — has been called into question (Sawyer 1998: 85).

Strongholds

The simple, yet often unanswerable question is this: at what period were these sites in use as strongholds? Quite often places called *burh* are the sites of prehistoric hill-forts, so in these instances the period of use as a stronghold may date to the Iron Age; but we know that such places were sometimes reused as forts in the Anglo-Saxon period. Notably, the prehistoric enclosure at Chisbury (Wiltshire) seems to have been reoccupied as part of the later ninth- and tenth-century fortification of the West Saxon kingdom (Brooks 1964: 78). Some later *burh* names, especially those first recorded after the eleventh century, seem to denote manors (Parsons and Styles 2000: 77–78). Even places called *burh* for

---

[4] Conisbrough (ON *konungr* perhaps replacing earlier OE *cyning* 'king', Smith 1961a: 125–26), was in the hands of King Harold in 1066 but had been in the possession of Wulfric Spot at the start of the eleventh century. So presumably the first element of the place-name made reference to an earlier king (Smith 1961a: 126).

which there is no known trace of a prehistoric stronghold, and for which the earliest recorded forms date to the late Anglo-Saxon period, could just as well belong to the fifth century as to the tenth.

Some doubt has also been cast on the precise meaning of *burh* in place-names. While the etymology of the word clearly points to a defensive meaning, the primary function of places called *burh* may not always have been defensive. Blair (Blair 2005: 249–51), for example, has recently suggested that an important early use of *burh* in place-names was in reference to minsters rather than fortified sites, essentially glossing Latin *urbs*. Draper (Draper 2008 and Draper 2009), taking an archaeological approach, suggests that, far from being middle or later Anglo-Saxon strongholds, many places called *burh* were thegnly residences, often with curvilinear enclosures, and (Draper 2008: 248) draws attention to the use of *burh-bryce* in Alfred's laws (Af 40) for breaking into the residences of people from thegnly status upwards, in contrast to *edor-bryce* ('hedge or fence breaking') for offences against the dwellings of churls.

The conclusion to be drawn from these discussions is an important one: that a place with a name that contains *burh* as its final element, or which is otherwise referred to in documents or local toponymy as *burh*, was probably not created specifically as an Anglo-Saxon military stronghold and almost certainly not as a stronghold of the type outlined in the document known as the Burghal Hidage, which anyway does not use the term *burh* (Parsons and Styles 2000: 76). Having said this, it would be entirely wrong to assume even that the majority of Anglo-Saxon strongholds were purpose-built, let alone of the same nature as Burghal Hidage fortifications such as Cricklade (Wiltshire) or Wallingford (Oxfordshire). The proliferation of major strongholds in Mercia and Wessex is almost certainly a feature of new strategic planning and an increased military capacity in the ninth century. In the middle Anglo-Saxon period, by contrast, defensive organization seems to have relied on a series of defensible sites of widely differing types — royal, secular aristocratic, or ecclesiastical residences, prehistoric enclosures, and former Roman walled settlements (Halsall 2003: 215–16; Yorke this volume). Although the primary function of these sites might not have been a military one, they could be pressed into service as refuges or military hard points in times of trouble. While such sites were superseded by larger, planned strongholds, they were not abandoned or replaced but probably continued to serve an ad hoc military role throughout the period and in conjunction with the burghal defences (Baker and Brookes 2013). In this regard, whether they were ecclesiastical or thegnly residences, such sites could also have a nominal and sometimes practical military role.

In a sense, the problem here may not be so much to do with Anglo-Saxon interpretations of enclosed settlements as the interpretations imposed by modern observers. It is convenient to categorize sites by their political, social, or religious function and status, drawing distinctions between royal, manorial, and minster sites, and sites with a military purpose. In practice, there may have been considerable overlap in the roles of high-status enclosed sites. Whether religious or secular, manorial or royal, these places would have been social and economic focal points, responsible (among other things) for collection of dues and surplus produce, administration of law and justice, and overseeing of religious rites and secular obligations. As central places they would have been natural rallying points in times of trouble, and as well as defining the perimeters of these important administrative sites, the defendable enclosure would also have made them effective refuges. Indeed, it was presumably the defensible qualities of their enclosures that allowed such sites to continue to function in times of crisis. In other words, a military role may have been secondary for most of these sites, but the defensive enclosure was nevertheless a defining characteristic, without which their primary functions would have been more difficult. Whatever the principal purpose of places called *burh*, it must not be forgotten that the primary sense of the word implies defensive capabilities (Parsons and Styles 2000: 74).

Evidence of the importance of the element *burh* in the study of late Anglo-Saxon defensive organization is clearly equivocal. Nevertheless, the language of late Anglo-Saxon fortification certainly hints at the need to examine places called *burh* in some detail, and the *Chronicle* uses the term repeatedly when discussing the construction of forts. We are told, for example, that Edward '*het gewyrcan ða burg*' (ordered the fort to be constructed) south of the Welland at Stamford, and '*getimbrede þa burg*' (built the fort) at Maldon (ASC A s.a. 914–18), and so on. Yet, of the thirty-three sites listed in the Burghal Hidage, only four contain this element (Chisbury and Malmesbury in Wiltshire, Shaftesbury in Dorset, and Burpham in West Sussex; Dodgson 1996). A further six contain elements denoting fortifications of some kind (OE *cæster* and *(ge)weorc*),[5] but at least four of these refer to reused Roman forts, rather than

---

[5] Southwark is *suþriganaweorce* 'the *(ge)weorc* or fortification of the men of Surrey'; the *cæster* names are Hastings (*hæstingaceastre* in BH), Chichester, Exeter, Portchester, and Winchester (Dodgson 1996). Dodgson takes the use of *cæster* in the name of Hastings to be a 'title of dignity befitting the erstwhile capital of a once independent nation', since Hastings has no Roman archaeology likely otherwise to explain the use of this term (Dodgson 1996: 99). Combes and Lyne (Combes and Lyne 1995) propose an alternative identification. Hill, on the

specially constructed late Anglo-Saxon ones. This clearly results from a phase of fortifying or refortifying settlements in strategically important locations, or perhaps making use of existing defensive structures whether currently inhabited or not, without an associated process of renaming to reflect the new function of the sites.

Even if we look beyond the Burghal Hidage, at the forts mentioned in other documentary sources, the picture is much the same. The A and C recensions of the *Chronicle*, for example, record the construction of a number of strongholds in the early decades of the tenth century. Again, the place-names concerned give little suggestion of a primarily military function. There are more references to reused Roman fortifications, such as Chester (Cheshire) and Towcester (Northamptonshire), and there are names with nothing to do with fortification, such as Maldon (Essex), Hertford (Hertfordshire), and Nottingham (Nottinghamshire). Relatively few of the forts have names of the Chirbury (Shropshire) or Eddisbury (Cheshire) type, where the generic is *burh*, and some of these, in any case, refer to prehistoric forts not purpose-built Anglo-Saxon strongholds. It is not a surprise that the fortification of Viking Age Wessex and Mercia should have consisted of a mixture of existing settlements, great and small, refortified or provided with defences for the first time, and reoccupied Roman and prehistoric forts; but it does underline the difficulty of attempting to identify late Anglo-Saxon forts using place-name evidence alone, when almost any type of place-name might be relevant.

In this context, one recorded place-name may be of special significance. The construction of a fortification at *Weardburh* is recorded in the Chronicle under the year 915 (ASC C) and was the site of the granting of a charter at about the same time (S 225). The precise location of this site is unknown, but recent discussion identifies it either with the *Westbyrig* recorded in the eleventh century (ASC C s.a. 1053) and perhaps to be associated with Gwespyr in Llanasa (Flint; Coates 1998), or alternatively with Whitchurch in Shropshire (Carroll 2010: 251–54). Whatever the correct identification, the place-name *Weardburh* seems not to have survived, and this may point to its coining in the later Anglo-Saxon period to describe a fortified site with a specific function (OE *weard-burh* means 'lookout-stronghold'). If this function was not its most distinctive feature for long, it is possible that the name was superseded by a more appropriate one, or that it failed to displace an earlier name. As Coates

other hand, may be right in suggesting that a former Roman fort at Hastings has been lost 'presumably beneath the waves' (Hill 1996: 205).

(Coates 1998: 11) points out, if the name *Weardburh* became redundant due to a loss of lookout functions, it 'might imply that the change [in this case to *Westbury*] took place whilst the etymology of *Weardburh* was still a living force in the use of the name, that is, within a very few decades of its fortification'.[6] The further implication of this might be that the name *Weardburh* arose as a direct result of its fortification by Æthelflæd and its use in local surveillance.

The place-names Todber (Dorset) and Tutbury (Staffordshire) may both derive from OE *tōt(e)-burh* (lookout-stronghold) and may thus be analogous with *Weardburh*, although OE *tōt(e)-beorg* (lookout-hill) is perhaps more likely in the case of Todber (Mills 1989: 82–83; Horovitz 2005: 548).[7] That Tutbury might have been a third Æthelflædan stronghold in Staffordshire, in addition to Stafford and Tamworth, is not a new suggestion (Palliser 1976: 146; Jones and Bond 1987: 93, fig. 45, 97, table 5; Kincey 2008). The 'Park Pale' earthworks at Tutbury may well represent the defensive works of an Anglo-Saxon stronghold, or of an Iron Age hill-fort that could have been refortified and reused in the Anglo-Saxon period (Kincey 2008: 55–59). The possibility that sites such as this were prehistoric forts that were simply recognized as affording good views encourages caution, since Gelling (Gelling 1997: 146–47) notes the frequent coincidence of the compounds OE *weard-setl* (watch or guard house) and *tōt-ærn* (lookout-house) with prehistoric enclosures in elevated positions; but Tutbury at least is located on the Staffordshire/Derbyshire border (Kincey 2008: 50, fig. 1), an area that may well have been on or near the Mercian frontier in the early tenth century.

More generally, *burh* place-names in which the first element refers to timber or planks of some kind, such as Bredbury in Greater Manchester (Dodgson 1970: 262) or Lathbury, Buckinghamshire (Mawer and Stenton 1925: 8), may indicate strongholds used or reused in the Anglo-Saxon period, if the first element can be taken to denote the material of construction or some form of

---

[6] It should be noted, however, that the Æthelflædan stronghold of *Cledemutha* is thought to have been further to the west, at Rhuddlan (Flint); for *Weardburh* to become literally the westernmost *burh* in northern Mercia — the *Westbury* — Rhuddlan must already have fallen into Welsh hands, which it seems certain to have done by the middle of the eleventh century (Coates 1998: 10–11).

[7] The forms of Tutbury (*Toteberie*, 1086; *Tuttesbir'*, *Tutteburie*, *Tuttesbur'*, 1087×1100; *Stutesberia* 1139×1160) are admittedly problematic and might have one of several origins; but 'lookout' or 'lookout man' is a reasonable interpretation of the first element (Horovitz 2005: 548), and one appropriate to the prominent vantage point offered from Castle Hill (Kincey 2008: 58).

revetting. During which part of the Anglo-Saxon period such strongholds were named is not evident from the names themselves, but on the grounds of geographical location alone both might fit in with Edward's and Æthelflæd's programmes of fortress construction in the east and north-west Midlands (Baker 2011). These and certain other types of *burh* names might be worth investigating as potential pointers to Anglo-Saxon military activity.

In assessing sites of a military nature, OE *cæster* (city, walled town, fortification) (Parsons and Styles 2000: 158–62) should certainly not be overlooked. Although in place-names the term was normally used in reference to Roman forts, a number of these may well have continued in use in the Anglo-Saxon period as centres of royal power or as refuges. In particular, instances such as Leicester and Worcester,[8] where the first element seems to be a folk-name (Parsons and Styles 2000: 158–62), and *Uaeclingacaestir*,[9] which contains an *-inga-* group-name formation, might belong with Canterbury (Ekwall 1936: 178; Brooks 1971: 83 n. 3) and *Wihtgaraburh* (ASC s.a. 530, 544)[10] as possible examples of early or middle Anglo-Saxon *Volksburgen* or tribal refuges. Of course, these sites were originally built before the fifth century, but they were clearly capable of being reused by the Anglo-Saxons.

Difficulties in identifying the language of Anglo-Saxon military defence are further highlighted by apparent differences between the usage of military terminology in contemporary documents and its application in place-names. Staying, for the moment, with words meaning 'stronghold', the place-name element *fæsten* is a case in point (this element is examined at greater length, with early forms and discussion of probable etymologies, in Baker 2008). OE *fæsten* is used frequently in late Anglo-Saxon documents to designate strongholds. Indeed, in several Anglo-Saxon charters the compound *fæsten-geweorc* is used (presumably as an alternative to *burh-geweorc*) to denote the obligation to construct and repair town defences (S 218, S 355, S 427, and S 1285). So there seems to be a clear association between the term *fæsten* and the creation of Anglo-Saxon defences. As a generic, the element occurs in approximately fifteen place-names (one at least now lost) and is used about three times as a marker in a boundary clause. This is a relatively small number of instances, most

---

[8] *Ligeraceastre* (ASC A s.a. 917; Cox 1998: 1–3; Watts 2004: 367–68); *Wigranceastre* (in a charter of Æthelbald of Mercia S 102; Mawer and Stenton 1927: 1, 19–20; Watts 2004: 700).

[9] Bede's alternative name for the Roman town at St Albans in Hertfordshire (Bede *HE*, I. 7 (p. 34); Gover, Mawer, and Stenton 1938: 86–87; Watts 2004: *sub* Watling Street).

[10] This may well be a corruption or substitution for *Wihtwaraburh* 'the stronghold of the people of Wight' (Plummer and Earle 1892: 14; Sims-Williams 1983: 30).

of which are minor names, perhaps lending support to the element's use at a relatively late date and during a fairly closely confined period, such as might be provided by a programme of fort-building. The survival of the element predominantly in minor names might also point to its use in reference to sites chosen for their defensive nature, rather than existing settlements given new fortifications, or new sites chosen with socio-economic concerns in mind, which would be expected to develop into important settlements. So as a place-name element, it would seem, on the face of it, to be of potential significance in the identification of late Anglo-Saxon purpose-built, perhaps even temporary, fortified sites.

Certainly, the sense 'stronghold' cannot be ruled out altogether, but a closer consideration of the individual cases suggests that this was not normally, if ever, the meaning in place-names. For such a small corpus of place-names, the *fæsten* group shows a remarkable degree of repetition in the compounds it forms. Most notably, there are apparently four instances where *fæsten* forms the second part of a compound with OE *holegn* (holly): Hollyfast twice, once in Allesley, West Midlands (Gover and others 1936: 153), once in Forton, Staffordshire (Oakden 1984: 149); Holyfast in Aston, West Midlands (Gover and others 1936: 34); and the lost field-name *Holy Vaste* in Westbury, Gloucestershire (Smith 1964b: 208). If there were only one or two instances of this compound, a qualifying element of a botanical nature might be taken to refer to a distinctive feature of the local flora — perhaps these were the strongholds near to holly bushes; but to have such a high proportion of *fæsten* place-names qualified by the same plant name casts doubt on this explanation. If such a high proportion (about 22 per cent) of places called *fæsten* were found next to a holly bush, holly bushes would cease to be a distinguishing feature, and we might anyway be entitled to expect a few of the *fæstennu* to be distinguished by other plant-names. There are apparently, however, no instances of place-names of the *Æsc-fæsten* (ash-tree stronghold) or *Þorn-fæsten* (thorn bush stronghold) type. It seems, therefore, that the holly in question was not a distinctive marker but an integral part of the *fæsten*. The most obvious interpretation of this is that the dense, prickly, evergreen holly was what made up the defences of the *fæsten*, but these can hardly have been defences constructed to keep out determined human attackers. It is more likely that a *holegn-fæsten* was a place made inaccessible by the presence of holly, and therefore a stronghold in a figurative sense, perhaps a place where a stubborn sheep might stray and become difficult to find, or where part of a herd might be corralled temporarily. Support for such a compound noun comes in the form of a term *brōmfæsten* (literally 'broom-plant stronghold') which occurs once in an Anglo-Saxon glossary. The *Dictionary of Old English* (DOE) takes this to mean '(inaccessible) place hedged about by

broom or covered with broom', and it seems probable that *holegn-fæsten* has a similar sense.

A further three instances of *fæsten* — Holdfast in Worcestershire (Mawer and Stenton 1927: 140) and in Haslemere, Surrey (Gover and others 1934: 205), and the field-name Hold Fast in Aberford, West Yorkshire (Smith 1961b: 100) — may contain either OE *holegn* or OE *holh* (a hollow), although forms of the last two examples are late and open to other interpretations. OE *holh* is another qualifier perhaps less appropriate for human defences than for an animal's hiding place, while two places called *Brookfast*, one in Middleton, Derbyshire (Cameron 1959: 397), the other in Bampton and Weald, Oxfordshire (Crossley and Currie 1996: 31–43), could be 'the stronghold by the stream', but might more suitably be thought of as 'the place made naturally inaccessible by the presence of a stream'. Of the other nine instances of *fæsten* as a second element, animals or animal husbandry are referred to in three: Buckfast (OE *bucc* (buck); Gover, Mawer, and Stenton 1931: 293), *on wærnan fæsten* in the bounds of Creedy (S 1546b; probably OE *wērna* (stallion)), both in Devon, and Hornifast in Pillaton, Cornwall (OE *hirde* (a herdsman); Gover n.d.: 198; Smith 1956: 163; Svensson 1987: 97). In a fourth the name occurs in a parish called Studland (Dorset), which is from OE *stōdland*, 'tract of land where a herd of horses is kept' (Mills 1977: 43). Taken together, this evidence suggests that *fæsten*, where it occurs in place-names, was used more commonly to describe metaphorical strongholds used by animals than real, human strongholds.[11]

Whether this is also the case in place-names where *fæsten* forms the first (specific) element is less certain. Instances of *fæsten-dīc* in Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, and Kent (Mawer and Stenton 1925: 207; Armstrong and others 1952: lxiv; Gover, Mawer, and Stenton 1931: 1; Gover 1958: 256; Cullen 1997: 244; S 175; S 820), for instance, may well refer to earthworks that served or could serve a military purpose, and an eighth-century defensive context has been suggested for use of the Bexley example, whatever its date of construction (Brookes and Harrington 2011). It is also unclear why *fæsten-geweorc* was preferred to *burh-geweorc* in four Anglo-Saxon charters (S 218, S 355, S 427, and S 1285). Although all four charters are concerned with grants in the Berkshire, Wiltshire, and Hampshire region, they each come from different archives and purportedly from across the period 883 to 934. Yorke (this volume) identifies a

---

[11] Note ASC A s.a. 878, where Alfred hides in the marshes, '*7 he lytle werede uniepelice æfter wudum for, 7 on morfæstenum*'. This last word, *morfæstenum* (dat. pl.) might be translated as 'fen-fastnesses' (Whitelock 1979: 195), 'inaccessible places in marshes' (Garmonsway 1972: 74), or similar.

terminological distinction in the main narrative sources from this period when dealing with different types of stronghold, and it is possible that a similarly nuanced meaning of terms such as *burh*, *fæsten*, and *geweorc* was understood by charter scribes of the same period. A regional variation in usage is also possible. On the other hand, the earliest charter occurrences cited by DOE of the alternative terms *burh-bōt* and *burh-geweorc* are dated to 955 (twelfth) and 1061 (twelfth) respectively (S 566 (and cf. S 914) and S 1032), while use of the compound *burh-bōt* in law codes seems to begin in the time of Æthelred II (v Atr, 26.1; Liebermann 1903: 243). By the eleventh century, OE *wall-(ge)weorc* seems to have become an established alternative, although most instances come from the Worcester archive, so regional usage is again a possibility (Stevenson 1914: 689 n. 2).[12] The word *burh* may have become the preferred term for a stronghold towards the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, or changes in the physical nature and characteristics of fortified sites — de novo construction, or increased use of stone, for example — may have made *burh* and perhaps also *wall* more appropriate terms than *fæsten* after the early tenth century. In general, as in the narrative sources, the context of *fæsten* in legal and administrative texts suggests that its meaning was very similar to that of *burh*, but a more nuanced usage should not be ruled out.

Old English fyrd

Other elements can present more difficulty. OE *fyrd* is another word well evidenced in later Anglo-Saxon documents, in the context of military activity. It also occurs in a handful of place-names and charter boundary clauses — about ten in all. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* uses the term *fyrd* when dealing with English armies, as opposed to the Danish *here* (host), and in Old English texts, *fyrd* has the meanings '(obligatory) military service', 'military expedition', 'army', and a transferred sense 'multitude' (DOE).[13] The *Dictionary of Old English* notes the occurrence in charters of the compound *fyrd-strǣt*, which

---

[12] From the Old Minster, Winchester archive is S 976 (1035 (twelfth century)) and from Worcester are S 1309 (966 (early eleventh century)), S 1313 (967 (eleventh century)), S 1326 (969), S 1332 (977 (early eleventh century)), S 1362 (990 (early eleventh century)), S 1394 (1042), S 1406 (1046×1053 (seventeenth century)); S 1366 (991 (early eleventh century)) simply uses '*geweorce*' (dat. sg.).

[13] More fully, '(obligatory) military service', 'military expedition, campaign', 'military force, troops, army, militia', and a transferred sense 'vast assemblage (resembling an army in number), host, multitude' (DOE).

it takes to mean 'military road', and in place-names *fyrd* is often compounded with a word referring to a routeway, though none of these place-names is still in use. Similarly, Stenton took *fyrd-strēt* to denote a road used by the local militia (Stenton 1936: 235). However, since one possible sense of *fyrd* is 'multitude' (DOE sense 4), some caution on the military connotations of terms such as *fyrd-strēt* is required. OE *here-pæð* may provide an important parallel. It has been pointed out (e.g. Smith 1956: 244; Kitson forthcoming) that OE *here* is defined by the laws of Ine as any group of more than thirty-five people (Ine 13.1; Liebermann 1903: 94; Whitelock 1979: 400), and this may be relevant to the meaning of *here-pæð*. Stenton explained *here-pæð* as a road for an army, 'if only a primitive Saxon army of thirty-five men and upwards' (Stenton 1936: 3). Gelling and Cole (Gelling and Cole 2000: 90) take *here-pæð* to be the West Saxon term for a 'main road', and Kitson considers it to be 'a road reliably passable for substantial groups of people' (Kitson forthcoming), essentially the West Saxon equivalent of OE *strēt* as used in areas of the south-east. On this basis, then, it should not perhaps be assumed—especially in view of the comparative distributions of *here-* and *fyrd-* road names, which suggests the possibility of a dialectal split (see below)—that terms such as *fyrd-strēt* necessarily refer to military use. Of course, main roads might have been used by armies, but that does not mean that they had a specific military purpose or that their function was primarily martial.

In place-names and charters, *fyrd* is most common in the east Midlands, where the compound *fyrd-weg* 'military way' is recorded in *Le Ferdeweye* in Wilbarston (Northamptonshire) (1150; Gover, Mawer, and Stenton 1933: 6), *Ferdwey* in Thornborough, Buckinghamshire (*c.* 1240; Mawer and Stenton 1925: 259), and *le Verdeweye* in Cambridgeshire (Reaney 1943: 349 gives only this form and no location), while *Ferdemaneweye* in Eversden (also Cambridgeshire) (thirteenth; Reaney 1943: 18) seems to be 'army-men's path or road'. The compound *fyrd-strēt* occurs in the bounds of Church Stowe (Northamptonshire) (*fyrdstræt*; S 615; Gover, Mawer, and Stenton 1933: 30) and as an earlier name for Banbury Lane in Adlestrop (Gloucestershire) (*to cynges ferdstrete*; S 1340; Smith 1964a: 212). Three further charter instances of *fyrd-strēt* occur in the Evesham (Worcestershire) area, probably all referring to a single road.[14] Another relevant name, a lost *Ferdgate* in Leicestershire,

---

[14] The routeway in question is thought to be a stretch of Roman road just south-east of Porter's Plantation on the boundary between Bengeworth and Wickhamford (Hooke 1990: 15). The instance in the bounds of Bengeworth (S 1590) seems to be referred to again as *fyrd-stret* in an Evesham charter (S 1664; Grundy 1931: 25–26). The wording of the Twyford refer-

may contain ON *gata* (a way, a path, a road, a street) given its location within the Danelaw (Cox 2004: xi). Such a meaning is in keeping with the other track-related *fyrd* place-names, and Cox identifies it with a substantial length of routeway through Leicestershire (Cox 2004: xi). The hybrid compound of an OE word meaning 'army' with an ON word meaning 'road' may be unexpected but is not unparalleled, if Fleet Hargate, Lincolnshire (*Herregate* 1276, Cameron 1998: *s.n.*) is indeed a compound of OE *here* and ON *gata*, both compounds presumably arising after the borrowing of ON *gata* into English (cf. MED *s.v. gāte*). Alternatively, *Ferdgate* may be comparable with the *fyrd geat* mentioned in charters for Headborne Worthy (S 309) and Micheldever (S 374) in Hampshire, where the second element seems more likely to be OE *geat* (gate, gap). Verdley in Fernhurst, West Sussex (*Verdelay*, 1318; Mawer, Stenton, and Gover 1929–30: 20) seems to be a compound of *fyrd* and OE *lēah* (woodland clearing), and finally, *fyrd hammas* in a charter for Stanmore, Berkshire (S 542), in which the second element is OE *hamm*, may also contain *fyrd*.[15]

The first thing of note is the geographical distribution of these place-names. Most of them are located in the south and central Midlands. There are no known instances to the north of Leicestershire or in the region to the west of Leicestershire and north of Evesham, which comprises most of the west Midlands. Only two or three examples are known south of the Thames, and none of these is compounded with a road term, unlike the more northerly instances, all of which are, assuming Ferdgate does contain ON *gata*. It is tempting to postulate a difference in the use of *fyrd* in the two areas, if not in its meaning. *Herepæð* or *herestrǣt* place-names are rare in the south-east

ence (S 1599) is very similar to that for S 1664, and probably denotes the same road. Although modern Twyford is to the north of Evesham, well to the north of the road in question, Mawer and Stenton (Mawer and Stenton 1927: 265) thought it likely that Twyford was the original name for the whole of the area within the bend of the Avon, in which Evesham is located.

[15] The bounds read: '*þonnon on fyrd hammas, anlang stifig weges*' (S 542; Kelly 2000: 172–75). Gelling (Gelling 1976: 651) suggests that *fyrd hammas* might contain OE *fyrde*, a variant of *ford*, rather than *fyrd*. Forsberg (Forsberg 1979: 150–51) prefers Ritter's suggestion of ellipsis here and in *fyrdgeat*, the *fyrd* standing for *fyrdstrǣt* or *fyrdwīc*, and the compound thus meaning '*hammas* or enclosures by the *fyrdstrǣt*'. He notes also the proximity of the *fyrdhammas* to a road (Old Street) that might have suited the description *fyrdstrǣt* (Old Street may well have intersected with a road linking Winchester to Oxford, as it does today). Alternatively, in view of the strategic importance of the roads in this area, Forsberg proposes that the Berkshire *fyrd* met at *fyrdhammas* (army enclosures), which were perhaps used for keeping their horses. Kelly (Kelly 2000: 175) treats the element as uncertain but perhaps connected with *fyrd* (army), and the editors of Langscape include it under that headword.

Midlands, and it is possible that *fyrdweg* and *fyrdstrǣt* represent the direct equivalents of this type of compound in that region. South of the Thames, where *herepæð* names are frequently found, it would be inappropriate to create road names using *fyrd*, but other, non-road names would not be so unexpected. It is of particular note that the Headborne Worthy charter mentions a *fyrdgeat* and a *wíc herpaðe* (dat. sg.) or *wīc-here-pæð* as consecutive features in the same boundary clause.[16]

If it is dialectal differences that govern the separate toponymic distributions of *fyrd-* and *here-* in compounds denoting roads, we might expect to find one or two instances of *fyrd* compounded with *pæð*; but the distribution of *here-pæð*, *here-weg*, and *here-strǣt* suggests that these too have dialectal limits, and it is quite possible that the midland *fyrd-* names are outside the area where *pæð* was a normal generic in such compounds. On the other hand, the divergence may not be dialectal but topographical. Gelling and Cole (Gelling and Cole 2000: 89–91) make no mention of a regional limit to the distribution of *pæð*, but they and Kitson (Kitson forthcoming) note the use of the term *pæð* to denote 'an upland path'. Such a sense, however, was presumably not carried in the compound *here-pæð*, if it was a more general term for a main road or a West Saxon term for the same kind of road as was called *strǣt* in the dialect defined by Kitson (Kitson forthcoming) as 'old south-eastern'.

This is a small corpus of names, but it may be possible to draw some conclusions about their meaning and usage, and whether the *fyrd* referred to in these names was an army or a multitude. Perhaps the most important example in this context is *Ferdmaneweye* in Eversden, apparently a reference to the so-called Akeman Street in Cambridgeshire, a Roman road that links Ermine Street with Cambridge and Ely. In this instance, we seem to have OE *fyrdmann* (soldier, gen. pl. *fyrdmanna*), a specific reference to military individuals rather than to an army, real or metaphorical. OE *fyrdmen* (nom. pl.) is not on record as referring to a non-military multitude. Whether or not a parallel can be drawn between this use of *fyrdmann* and the examples where only *fyrd* occurs is another matter, but *Ferdmaneweye* does at least suggest that a road could be defined by reference to soldiers.

Another significant use of *fyrd* comes in the bounds of Church Stowe (*fyrd-strǣt*, S 615; Gover, Mawer, and Stenton 1933: 30). In this instance, the bounds take us: 'south along Watling Street (*suð andlang Wæclinga stræte*) to *Loudwell*

---

[16] S 309. The section in question reads: '*up to fyrd geate . of fyrd geate . to wíc herpaðe . and lang wic herpæðes . æft to kynges stane*' (de Birch 1885–93: no. 473).

stream (*an hludan wylles*), along the stream to the *fyrdstræt* (*on þa fyrd stræt*), along the road to the second *stræt* (*on þa oþre stræt*)' (Kelly 2001: 264–66). Here we have a clear distinction between different types of *stræt*. Watling Street was certainly a Roman road; there is no clear evidence that the other two roads were, but no reason to dismiss them simply because they were not noted by Margary (Margary 1973). Like so many modern routeways, it is clearly possible that they were created at a very early time and perhaps existed before the Anglo-Saxon period (Hoskins and Taylor 1988: 191). On the other hand, Gelling (Gelling 1997: 153; Gelling and Cole 2000: 93–94) warns against the assumption that *stræt* in charter boundary clauses denotes a Roman road rather than simply a main road or a road 'with some signs of a made surface'. The question here concerns not so much what constitutes a Roman road in modern discussion, but what kind of track was considered by Anglo-Saxon observers to be a *stræt*. There must have been a set of characteristics that defined the road, in the minds of Anglo-Saxon name-givers, as being distinctively a *stræt*, and these may have included evidence of metalling or sophisticated civil engineering (a well-defined *agger* or terrace, or perhaps the remains of a bridge or causeway), straightness of alignment, or the apparent length of the single stretch of road. How strong the primary sense of *via strata* (paved road), the origin of the loanword *stræt*, remained throughout the Anglo-Saxon period is impossible to say without a very detailed study of the usage of *stræt* in documents and place-names. A road in fact need not have been Roman at all for it to have appeared to be a *stræt*; nor would Anglo-Saxons have considered every road created or used in Roman times to have been a *stræt*.

The other two instances presumably refer to major routeways, but only one of them is called a *fyrd-stræt*.[17] Clearly not all main roads were called *fyrd-stræt* and a *fyrd-stræt* was not necessarily a Roman road, or even the most arterial road in its area. This at least leaves open the possibility that roads quali-

---

[17] It should be noted that the use of *stræt* in at least one place-name compound seems to be governed by regional variations in dialect. A notable dichotomy exists between areas in which *herepæð* is found in place-names (predominantly in the southwest), and areas where *herestræt* is used (almost exclusively in the southeast). It is not necessarily true that all the *herestræt* names refer to Roman roads, nor that the *herepæð* names do not. It is probably also worth noting that all the charter instances of *fyrd* with a 'road' generic have *stræt*, but none of them survives as a post-Conquest place-name. On the other hand, no instance of *fyrdweg* survives in a pre-Conquest source. It is possible, but by no means certain, that *fyrdweg* superseded *fyrdstræt* as the normal descriptive term for a particular kind of road, some time in the late Anglo-Saxon or early post-Conquest period. All the elements concerned remained in use in Middle English.

fied by the element *fyrd* had a specific association with military activity,[18] but *fyrd-strēt* and *fyrd-weg* were apparently not names given to all roads suited to the rapid movement of troops over long distances, since many Roman roads would have fallen into that category. This does not rule out the occasional use of *fyrd* to describe longer-distance military tracks. For example, the *fyrd-gata* in Leicestershire leads right into the heart of the territory of the Five Boroughs — or right out of the heart of it, depending on whether the people who used it were English or Viking.[19] Generally, however, the military importance of *fyrd-strēta* or *fyrd-wegas* may often have been at a local level.

Although their precise location is sometimes unknown, most of the *fyrd-strēt* and *fyrd-weg* names are situated close to strategically important points. The *fyrd-strēt* in Church Stowe seems to join Watling Street, near to its crossing of the River Nene and also to its intersection with another possible long-distance track.[20] In the late ninth century, Watling Street formed one end of the agreed boundary in the treaty between Alfred and Guthrum, and the intersection with potential overland and riverine routeways may have added to the significance of this stretch of the road. The former Roman town at Towcester, refortified by Edward the Elder, lies only ten kilometres south-south-east of Church Stowe and also on Watling Street. Church Stowe itself was the site of a late Anglo-Saxon minster church, and it is possible that some places of this type also served as strongholds (Wilson 1976: 443–44). The nearby settlement of Weedon Bec was a Mercian royal manor (Gelling 1982: 190–91).

Further south, *Ferdwey* in Thornborough cannot have been more than about five kilometres to the east of the Burghal Hidage fort of Buckingham. It might well have linked this stronghold with other forts further down the Great Ouse valley, and it also lay between Buckingham and Watling Street (though not a frontier stretch of that road). *Le Ferdeweye* in Wilbarston must have been within about three kilometres of the Roman road from Godmanchester

---

[18] It also tends to suggest that *fyrd-strēt* is not a dialectal equivalent of *strēt*, in the way that Kitson forthcoming proposes for *here-pæð*.

[19] We should not necessarily assume that they were English just because the element *fyrd* (employed by contemporary written sources in reference to the West Saxon army) is used. It is perhaps paradoxical that OE *here*, the first element of *here-pæð* — a compound so common in Wessex charters — is generally used by the *Chronicle* in reference to Viking hosts.

[20] This is the southern branch of the so-called Jurassic Way, which is supposed to have run past Northampton and crossed Watling Street to the south of Weedon, although its early existence in the Northamptonshire area has been cast in some doubt (Taylor 1979: 33, 34, fig. 14, and 184).

to Leicester,[21] and is also on the Jurassic Way (see n. 21). It may be significant that the Domesday Hundred of Stoke probably met at *Speller* (known as *Spellow Close* in the nineteenth century) in Wilbarston (Gover, Mawer, and Stenton 1933: 155 and cf. 131; Anderson 1934: 118 and cf. 122). Similarly, *Ferdmaneweye* (or Akeman Street) in Eversden links the putative late Anglo-Saxon fort at Cambridge to Ermine Street, the main road north from Edward's fort at Hertford into the Danelaw — or the main route from the east Midlands into Essex and east Hertfordshire, once again depending on whether the troops were English or Viking.

The *cynges ferdstrete* in Adlestrop appears to refer to the road which leads to Stow-on-the-Wold (Grundy 1935–36: 105),[22] and intersects with the Roman Fosse Way, which would have been the most direct route linking the Burghal Hidage forts of Bath, Malmesbury, and Cricklade to Leicester and the Five Boroughs. Again, Stow-on-the-Wold was the site of an Anglo-Saxon minster church. Verdley lies just off the road between the two Burghal Hidage forts of Chichester and Eashing, and *fyrdgeat* in Micheldever, is on the Roman road from Winchester to Silchester. Micheldever itself was a *villa regalis*. A charter (S 335) granting land at Wittenham, Oxfordshire, was drawn up here, so assemblies of some kind must have taken place at Micheldever.

Some care is needed when assigning historical significance on the basis of proximity to Roman roads. In some parts of the country, known Roman roads are almost ubiquitous (Briggs 2007), and the fact that a site is in the vicinity of one might be symptomatic of such a situation and need only show that it was located within the normal settlement zone (e.g. Brookes 2007: 67–69, fig. 32; Briggs 2009). On the other hand, the number of Roman roads still functioning by the ninth or tenth centuries may have declined considerably (Stenton 1936). Interestingly, three of the Roman roads in question here, Watling Street, Ermine Street, and the Fosse Way, made up along with the Icknield Way the four 'King's Highways' of later medieval tradition (Stenton 1936: 236; Cooper 2000, 356). They were clearly considered to be important routeways. In the present context, the size and socio-economic importance of the road are rel-

[21] Gover and others (Gover, Mawer, and Stenton 1933: 6) provide no source for this place-name, so its exact location is uncertain.

[22] Grundy equates this with the *regia strata de Norhamtun* of S 1548 (an apparently post-Conquest charter), and traces its course along various ridgeways to Northampton, via the great Cotswold ridgeway near Little Rollright, the north end of Edghill, and Banbury (where it crosses the Cherwell). This seems to describe the putative Jurassic Way, from Lincoln via Stamford, Northampton, Banbury, Stow-on-the-Wold and Bath to Glastonbury, on which see n. 21.

evant to an understanding of the *here-* and *fyrd-* compound nouns denoting pathways. Use by a multitude presupposes that the road was of suitable width; use by an army requires that the road was of strategic significance and part of a well-established, principal routeway (Halsall 2003: 148, 222).

In several cases, proximity to what might be considered major routeways provides reasonable grounds for assuming that places called *fyrd* were used by armies during the late Anglo-Saxon period. They may well have been roads with strategic value, linking together Anglo-Saxon strongholds,[23] or they may have been close to places of assembly or important mustering points: being close to major Roman roads, bordering on, or heading into, areas controlled by Scandinavian or other hostile forces, or linking important forts, lying in at least two instances near to minster churches and in at least one instance near to a hundred meeting-place. Even if the minsters in question were not fortified, their strategic position might have made them convenient landmarks where the militia from different areas could join forces. In the case of Church Stowe, for example, it is possible to imagine the psychological effect on the locals, of witnessing, on a fairly regular basis, large numbers of troops milling around in the road adjoining Watling Street, waiting for the rest of the *fyrd* to turn up, before pushing on into the north-east Midlands. Such an experience might well have been enough for the road to become known as *fyrd-strǣt*.

It is important not to get carried away. A notable, but as yet ill-defined, spatial association with Roman roads and late Anglo-Saxon forts is hardly compelling evidence for military use. It might just as easily be argued that the location of such sites, so close to major Roman roads, suggests that the *here-* and *fyrd-* routeways were important non-Roman roads. Why would such roads not be connected with forts and minsters? These would be the very routes where settlements might thrive and where forts might be required. It is worth reiterating that in view of their distribution, covering the counties of Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Buckinghamshire, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire, it is possible that *fyrd-strǣt* is the semantic equivalent in parts of the Midlands of *here-pæð* in Wessex, and that *here-pæð* is often interpreted as meaning 'main road', the first element referring to 'a large group of people', rather than to an actual army (Gelling and Cole 2000: 90; Kitson forthcom-

---

[23] In the case of Church Stowe, if the *fyrd-strǣt* linked it to Towcester, we would have to assume that Watling Street, which marked the frontier between England and the Danelaw here, could not always be used by Anglo-Saxon forces wishing to move between the two places. This would imply a very closely observed and guarded frontier (but cf. Davis 1982 for possible movement of the boundary).

ing). It is, however, hard to envisage many large, non-military groups using these roads. Apart from kings and their retinues, armies, and raiding parties (which would all have been of a military nature), there may perhaps have been significant groups of churchmen and perhaps pilgrims travelling in large numbers. The movement of livestock, on the other hand, would not necessarily have involved large numbers of humans. Nevertheless, if the term 'army road' were used figuratively of a road big enough for an army, then there is no need to assume that the road was actually used by large groups on a regular basis, just that it could be if necessary.

One further complication arises when *fyrd-strǣt* is qualified in some way. A notable instance is the *cynges fyrdstræt*, a section of ridgeway mentioned in the bounds of Adlestrop (S 1340). Grundy thought that this road could have been of Roman construction in view of its straightness; he traces the line of it all the way to Northampton (Grundy 1935–36: 105). There is no mention of such a road in Margary (Margary 1973), but it might be that Grundy was referring to part of the putative Jurassic Way, which is said to stretch from Lincoln, via Northampton, to Stow-on-the-Wold and Bath, although Taylor (Taylor 1979: 32–37, 184) casts some doubt on its prehistoric existence, at least in Northamptonshire.[24] If *fyrd-strǣt* meant simply 'main road', then we are dealing with 'the king's main road', perhaps the main road maintained by the king's men. If, on the other hand, it meant 'army road', then the Adlestrop example may have been the 'army road maintained by the king's men'. This provides another possible interpretation of roads known by names such as *here-pæð* and *fyrd-strǣt*: that they were roads for which a clear burden of maintenance rested either locally or with the king, although it does not necessarily imply that the *here* or *fyrd* was the group of people responsible for the maintenance (cf. Hart 1992: 530). They could have been maintained along with bridges and strongholds as an obligation associated with (but not specifically included in) the three common burdens (Steven Bassett, personal communication). A damaged bridge might be more of a hindrance than a road in poor condition, but in some instances there might be little point in maintaining river crossings for use by armies if the roads associated with them were not also kept in good repair. Such roads might then be given the name *fyrd-strǣt* because they were designated roads of military importance. On the other hand, there are no known instances of *here-* or *fyrd-brycg*, which might have been expected by analogy,

---

[24] If such a long-distance routeway was in use in Anglo-Saxon times, then it is feasible that the *fyrdstræt* in Church Stowe refers to part of the same track.

although a good number of *here-ford* names exist. Ultimately, in order to under-stand *fyrd-* names, we probably have to understand *here-* names as well, and this may require a very detailed topographical study. Greater consideration of triple compounds such as *sealt-here-pæð* and *þeod-here-pæð* where, on the face of it, *here* seems unlikely to mean 'army', might throw further light on these issues.

Conclusions

Place-names can go a considerable way to providing us with clues as to the orig-inal meaning and usage of particular terms, and it is perhaps just as important to identify military-sounding place-names that do not, in fact, have much rel-evance to military logistics as it is to identify those that do. There are several clear points to take from this. First of all, the language of Anglo-Saxon defence does not always correspond to the toponymy of Anglo-Saxon defence. Terms which refer to strongholds, military roads, or beacons in late Anglo-Saxon writings may or may not do so in place-names. Sometimes these terms take on a less literal meaning when used to describe the landscape, so it will take con-siderable care to establish, for example, whether a name such as Old Warden, Bedfordshire (*Wardone*, 1086; Mawer and Stenton 1926: 97–98), which means 'lookout hill', was called that because it had an official role as a look-out post or because it happens to afford fine views of the surrounding coun-tryside. Gelling (Gelling 1997: 146) claims that 'most instances of Toothill, Tuthill, Tuttle denote nothing more than an eminence with a view'. Hill and Sharp (Hill and Sharpe 1997) show that sites with names of this kind could be used as observation points, but it is far from certain that all such place-names relate to actual lookouts, let alone elements of an extensive signalling system. Secondly, but related to this issue, we know that many sites of military impor-tance did not have military place-names at all. A fort such as Oxford may have been referred to in speech and official accounts as the '*burh* of Oxford', in the same way as today it might be called the 'city of Oxford', but its existing name was not replaced by a *burh* place-name. It should furthermore be noted that the only Anglo-Saxon beacon site known from archaeological examination in England is not associated with any surviving place-names indicating its use as a lookout (Reynolds 1995, Reynolds 2000).[25]

---

[25] The place-name Yatesbury, the proposed site of the beacon, is first recorded as *Etesberie*, 1086, *Hyatebir'*, 1199 (Gover, Mawer, and Stenton 1939: 264). The second element of the name is OE *burh*, and the first is either a personal name (Ekwall 1960, *s.n.*; Mills 2003, *s.n.*; Watts

Thirdly, even if it can be established with reasonable certainty that a particular element in place-names does have military connotations, it is quite another thing to say that its military use belongs to the Viking Age. Forts, lookouts, and military roads represent points and routes of strategic value in the landscape. Though the strategically important places may change over time, many sites considered worthy of defensive circuits in early or pre-Anglo-Saxon times may have become strategically important again later on. Places that commanded naturally important features from a logistical point of view, such as river crossings, may have retained their strategic significance from the Roman period till the tenth century. We know that the military strategists of the late Anglo-Saxon period reused, often consciously, earlier military sites. On the other hand, they did not reuse all such sites. Working out to which period a *burh* name belongs is, therefore, very difficult. Finally, interesting distribution patterns can have more to do with dialectal differences than military organization — it would be dangerous, for example, to rely too heavily on conclusions drawn from a consideration of *fyrd* without considering in more detail the use of *here* in place-names.

Nevertheless, it is clear that place-names have an important role to play in our understanding of Anglo-Saxon defensive organization. Careful consideration of the usage and naming practices involved can throw light on the military relevance of individual place-names, even if it is to demonstrate that a word with military connotations does not necessarily imply military use when it occurs in place-names. Clearly, archaeological and documentary evidence is important in linking specific classes of place-name to specific types of site, but much can be learnt from the place-names themselves, by careful study of the types of compound that occur and the context in which they are used. A multidisciplinary approach is of the utmost importance, but onomastic evidence can go a long way towards identifying sites of possible or probable significance for the study of military and other uses of the landscape.

2004: 709), or OE *geat* (gate, or possibly gap, pass) in a (perhaps obscure) topographical sense (Ekwall 1960, *s.n.*; Gover, Mawer, and Stenton 1939: 264; cf. Baker and Brookes 2013, chap. 2). On the other hand, excavation of a mound called Wardhill in Shapinsay (Orkney), a place-name likely to indicate the presence of a lookout, showed it to have been a beacon, perhaps of Norse origin (Bradley and Gaimster 2000: 338).

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Birch, Walter Gray de (ed.). 1885–93. *Cartularium saxonicum: A Collection of Charters Relating to Anglo-Saxon History*, 3 vols (London)

Colgrave, Bertram, and R. A. B. Mynors (eds). 1969. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford)

Garmonsway, George N. (ed. and trans.). 1972. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, new edn (London)

Kelly, Susan E. (ed.). 2000. *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part I*, Anglo-Saxon Charters, 7 (Oxford)

——, (ed.). 2001. *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part II*, Anglo-Saxon Charters, 8 (Oxford)

Liebermann, Felix (ed.). 1903. *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols (Halle)

Plummer, Charles, and J. Earle. 1892. *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, with Supplementary Extracts from the Others: A Revised Text on the Basis of an Edition by John Earle*, 2 vols (Oxford)

——, 1899. *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, with Supplementary Extracts from the Others: A Revised Text on the Basis of an Edition by John Earle*, 2 vols (Oxford), II: *Introduction, Notes and Index*

Whitelock, Dorothy (ed.). 1979. *English Historical Documents, c. 500–1042*, 2nd edn (London)

Secondary Studies

Anderson, Olof S. 1934. *The English Hundred-Names* (Lund)

Armstrong, Aileen. M., and others. 1952. *The Place-Names of Cumberland*, English Place-Name Society, 20–22, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1950–52), III: *Introduction*

Baker, John. 2008. 'Old English *fæsten*', in *A Commodity of Good Names: Essays in Honour of Margaret Gelling*, ed. by Oliver J. Padell and David N. Parsons (Donnington), pp. 333–44

——, 2011. 'Warriors and Watchmen: Place-Names and Anglo-Saxon Civil Defence', *Medieval Archaeology*, 55, 258–67

Baker, John, and Stuart Brookes. 2013. *Beyond the Burghal Hidage: Anglo-Saxon Civil Defence in the Viking Age,* (Leiden)

Blair, John. 2005. *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford)

Bradley, John, and Märit Gaimster. 2000. 'Medieval Britain and Ireland in 1999', *Medieval Archaeology*, 44, 235–354

Briggs, Keith. 2007. 'The Distribution of Distance to Roman Roads in England', <http://keithbriggs.info/distance_to_roman_roads.html> [accessed 24 November 2009]

——, 2009. 'The Distribution of Distance of Certain Place-Name Types to Roman Roads', *Nomina*, 32, 42–57

Brookes, Stuart. 2007. *Economics and Social Change in Anglo-Saxon Kent, AD 400–900: Landscapes, Communities and Exchange*, British Archaeological Reports, 431 (Oxford)

Brookes, Stuart, and Sue Harrington. 2011. *The Kingdom and People of Kent, AD 400–1066: Their History and Archaeology* (Stroud)

Brooks, Nicholas P. 1964. 'The Unidentified Forts of the Burghal Hidage', *Medieval Archaeology*, 8, 74–90

——, 1971. 'The Development of Military Obligations in Eighth- and Ninth-Century England', in *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge), pp. 69–84

Cameron, Angus, Ashley Crandell Amos, and Antonette diPaolo Healey (eds). 2003. *The Dictionary of Old English: A to F* (Toronto) [on CD]

Cameron, Keith. 1959. *The Place-Names of Derbyshire*, English Place-Name Society, 27–29, 3 vols (Cambridge)

Cameron, Kenneth, with a contribution from John Insley. 1998. *A Dictionary of Lincolnshire Place-Names* (Nottingham)

Carroll, Jayne. 2010. 'Coins and the Chronicle: Mint-Signatures, History, and Language', in *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Literature, History, Language*, ed. by Alice Jorgenson, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 23 (Turnhout), pp. 243–73

Coates, Richard. 1998. 'Æthelflæd's Fortification of Weardburh', *Notes and Queries*, 45, 9–12

Combes, Pamela, and Malcolm Lyne. 1995. 'Hastings, Haestingaceaster and Haestingaport: A Question of Identity', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 133, 213–24

Cooper, Alan. 2000. 'The King's Four Highways: Legal Fiction Meets Fictional Law', *Journal of Medieval History*, 26, 351–70

Cox, Barrie. 1994a. *The Place-Names of Rutland*, English Place-Name Society, 67–69 (Nottingham)

——, 1994b. 'The Pattern of Old English Burh in Early Lindsey', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 23, 35–56

——, 1996. 'Yarboroughs in Lindsey', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 28, 50–60

——, 1998. *The Place-Names of Leicestershire: Part I*, English Place-Name Society, 75 (Nottingham)

——, 2004. *The Place-Names of Leicestershire: Part III*, English Place-Name Society, 81 (Nottingham)

Crossley, Alan, and Christopher R. J. Currie (eds). 1996. *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume XIII, Bampton Hundred (Part One)*, Victoria County Histories, 13 (London)

Cullen, Paul. 1997. 'The Place-Names of the Lathes of St Augustine and Shipway, Kent' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex)

Davis, Ralph Henry Carless. 1982. 'Alfred and Guthrum's Frontier', *English Historical Review*, 97, 803–10

Dodgson, J. McNeal. 1970. *The Place-Names of Cheshire: Part I*, English Place-Name Society, 44 (Cambridge)

——, 1996. 'A Linguistic Analysis of the Place-Names of the Burghal Hidage', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 98–122

Draper, Simon. 2008. 'The Significance of Old English *burh* in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 15, 240–53

——, 2009. '*Burh* Place-Names in Anglo-Saxon England', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 41, 103–18

Ekwall, Eilert. 1936. 'Some Notes on English Place-Names Containing Tribal Names', *Namn och Bygd*, 24, 178–83

——, 1960. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th edn (Oxford)

Forsberg, Rune. 1979. 'An Edition of the Anglo-Saxon Charter Boundaries of Berkshire', *Studia Neophilologica*, 51, 139–51

Gelling, Margaret. 1976. *The Place-Names of Berkshire: Part III*, English Place-Name Society, 51 (Cambridge)

——, 1982. 'Some Meanings of stōw', in *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Susan M. Pearce, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 102 (Oxford), pp. 187–96

——, 1997. *Signposts to the Past: Place-Names and the History of England*, 3rd edn (Chichester)

Gelling, Margaret and Ann Cole (eds). 2000. *The Landscape of Place-Names* (Stamford)

Goodall, Armitage. 1914. *Place-Names of South-West Yorkshire* (Cambridge)

Gover, John E. B. 1958. *Hampshire Place-Names*, unpublished typescript held at the Institute for Name-Studies (University of Nottingham)

——, n.d. *The Placenames of Cornwall*, unpublished typescript held at the Institute for Name-Studies (University of Nottingham)

Gover, John E. B., Allen Mawer, and Frank M. Stenton. 1931. *The Place-Names of Devon: Part I*, English Place-Name Society, 8 (Cambridge)

——, 1932. *The Place-Names of Devon: Part II*, English Place-Name Society, 9 (Cambridge)

——, 1933. *The Place-Names of Northamptonshire*, English Place-Name Society, 10 (Cambridge)

——, 1938. *The Place-Names of Hertfordshire*, English Place-Name Society, 15 (Cambridge)

——, 1939. *The Place-Names of Wiltshire*, English Place-Name Society, 16 (Cambridge)

Gover, John E. B., and others. 1934. *The Place-Names of Surrey*, English Place-Name Society, 11 (Cambridge)

——, 1936. *The Place-Names of Warwickshire*, English Place-Name Society, 13 (Cambridge)

Grundy, George Beardoe. 1931. *Saxon Charters of Worcestershire*, Birmingham Archaeological Society (Oxford)

——, 1935–36. *Saxon Charters and Field-Names of Gloucestershire*, Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society (Bristol)

Halsall, Guy. 2003. *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450–900* (London)

Hart, Cyril. 1992. *The Danelaw* (London)

Higham, Nick. 2006. 'Northumbria's Southern Frontier: A Review', *Early Medieval Europe*, 14, 391–418

Hill, David H. 1996. 'Appendix IV: Gazetteer of Burghal Hidage Sites', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 189–231

Hill, David H., and Sheila Sharpe. 1997. 'An Anglo-Saxon Beacon System', in *Names, Places & People: An Onomastic Miscellany in Memory of John McNeal Dodgson*, ed. by Alexander Rumble and David Mills (Stamford), pp. 97–108

Hooke, Della. 1990. *Worcestershire Anglo-Saxon Charter-Bounds* (Woodbridge)

Horovitz, David. 2005. *The Place-Names of Staffordshire* (Brewood)

Hoskins, Williams G., with Christopher. Taylor. 1988. *The Making of the English Land-scape* (London)

Jones, M. J., and Christopher J. Bond. 1987. 'Urban Defences', in *Urban Archaeology in Britain*, ed. by John Schofield and Roger Leech, Council for British Archaeology, Research Report, 61 (London), pp. 81–116

Kincey, Mark. 2008. 'Beyond the Pale? A Reinterpretation of Tutbury "Park Pale" Based on a Non-Invasive Archaeological Earthwork Survey', *Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions*, 42, 50–63

Kitson, Peter. Forthcoming. *A Guide to Anglo-Saxon Charter Boundaries*

Kurath, Hans, and others. 1956–2001. *Middle English Dictionary*, 14 vols in 15 (Ann Arbor)

Margary, Ivan D. 1973. *Roman Roads in Britain*, 3rd edn (London)

Mawer, Allen, and Frank M. Stenton. 1925. *The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire*, English Place-Name Society, 2 (Cambridge)

——, 1926. *The Place-Names of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire*, English Place-Name Society, 3 (Cambridge)

——, 1927. *The Place-Names of Worcestershire*, English Place-Name Society, 4 (Cambridge)

Mawer, Allen, Frank M. Stenton, and John E. B. Gover. 1929–30. *The Place-Names of Sussex: Parts I and II*, English Place-Name Society, 6–7 (Cambridge)

Mills, Anthony David. 1977. *The Place-Names of Dorset: Part I*, English Place-Name Society, 52 (Cambridge)

——, 1989. *The Place-Names of Dorset: Part III*, English Place-Name Society, 59 and 60 (Cambridge)

——, 2003. *A Dictionary of British Place-Names* (Oxford)

Oakden, James P. 1984. *The Place-Names of Staffordshire: Part I: Cuttlestone Hundred*, English Place-Name Society, 55 (Cambridge)

Palliser, David M. 1976. *The Staffordshire Landscape: The Making of the English Landscape* (London)

Parsons, David N., and Tania Styles. 2000. *The Vocabulary of English Place-Names (BRACE-CÆSTER)* (Nottingham)

Reaney, Percy H. 1943. *The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*, English Place-Name Society, 19 (Cambridge)

Reynolds, Andrew. 1995. 'Avebury, Yatesbury and the Archaeology of Communications', *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, 6, 21–30

——, 2000. 'Yatesbury', *Current Archaeology*, 171, 113–18

Sawyer, Peter. 1968. *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks, 8 (London)

——, 1998. *Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire*, History of Lincolnshire, 3 (Lincoln)

Sieveking, Gale de G., Ian H. Longworth, and K. E. Wilson (eds). 1976. *Problems in Economic and Social Archaeology* (London)

Sims-Williams, Patrick. 1983. 'The Settlement of England in Bede and the *Chronicle*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 12, 1–41

Smith, Albert Hugh. 1956. *English Place-Name Elements: Part I*, English Place-Name Society, 25 (Cambridge)

——, 1961a. *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire: Part I*, English Place-Name Society, 30 (Cambridge)

——, 1961b. *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire: Part IV*, English Place-Name Society, 33 (Cambridge)

——, 1962. *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire: Part VII*, English Place-Name Society, 36 (Cambridge)

——, 1964a. *The Place-Names of Gloucestershire: Part I*, English Place-Name Society, 38 (Cambridge)

——, 1964b. *The Place-Names of Gloucestershire: Part III*, English Place-Name Society, 40 (Cambridge)

Stenton, Frank M. 1936. 'The Road System of Medieval England', *Economic History Review*, 7, 1–21

Stevenson, W. H. 1914. 'Trinoda Necessitas', *English Historical Review*, 29, 689–703

Svensson, Örjan. 1987. *Saxon Place-Names of East Cornwall* (Lund)

Taylor, Christopher. 1979. *Roads and Tracks of Britain* (London)

Watts, Victor (ed.). 2004. *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names, Based on the Collections of the English Place-Name Society* (Cambridge)

Wilson, David. 1976. 'Defence in the Viking Age', in *Problems in Economic and Social Archaeology*, ed. by Gale de G. Sieveking, Ian H. Longworth, and K. E. Wilson (London), pp. 439–45

West Saxon Fortifications
in the Ninth Century:
The Perspective from the Written Sources

Barbara Yorke*

Discussions of defensive systems among the West Saxons usually take as their starting-point the Burghal Hidage. Although only post-Conquest versions of this text survive, in which it has been integrated with other material, it is generally assumed that modern edited versions can bring one close to an original document that was written either in the latter part of the reign of Alfred (871–99) or in that of his son Edward the Elder (899–924) (Hill 1969; Hill and Rumble 1996). The arrangements detailed within the Burghal Hidage are presumed in the greater part to be those ordered by King Alfred to ring Wessex with a defensive system of burhs that effectively deterred further Viking attacks. It is generally agreed that some burhs may date at least from the time of Alfred's brother Æthelbald (855–60) in whose reign reservation of the public obligation of fortress-work appears in West Saxon charters for the first time (Brooks 1971). However, the arrangements with which the document seems principally concerned are for garrisoning from hidated lands all or part of the walls of an integrated network of burhs. The installation of such garrisons is attributed to King Alfred and is rightly considered to be one of his major military and administrative achievements (Brooks 1979). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and the related versions of its text translated and supplemented by Asser and Æthelweard, have tended to play a subsidiary role in discussion of

---

* The following abbreviation will be used throughout this essay: Asser (Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, from Stevenson 1959 (unless otherwise noted)).

Barbara Yorke is Professor Emerita of Medieval History at the University of Winchester.

---

the West Saxon fortress system and have been chiefly valued for providing the broader military and political context in which the burhs operated.

The aim of this essay is, putting the Burghal Hidage temporarily to one side, to consider the evidence for early fortification in Wessex in the period *c.* 750–900 provided in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the Latin translations of it by Asser and Æthelweard. The term 'fortification' is used to describe any site that had defences capable of being held against an attacking force. Although descriptions of such fortresses in narrative accounts for the late eighth and ninth centuries are not extensive, it will be argued that they can nevertheless make a significant contribution to the understanding of the nature of fortified sites in Middle Saxon Wessex and of their terminology.

However, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* cannot simply be dipped into as a quarry of information on the period. Discussion of fortifications, as of other matters, has to proceed in consciousness of major problems in interpretation. Consideration of the annals of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is hindered (and probably always will be) by a lack of certainty about exactly who the authors were of any particular section and therefore of the context of composition. At a conference on the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* at York in 2004, David Dumville felt that 'Stenton's case for a scholarly ealdorman [of the first stage of compilation up to *c.* 890×892] has still not been demolished'. However, the majority of scholars who have written recently on the topic have tended to agree with James Campbell that the *Chronicle* in the form in which we have it seems to reflect court interests and concerns: 'to the extent that the *onus probandi* would seem to lie principally upon those who would hold it was not' (Campbell 2000: 144). It has generally been accepted that the widespread copying and distribution of manuscripts that lies behind our surviving versions is likely to have been at King Alfred's command and resembles his dissemination of the translation of Pope Gregory's *Pastoral Care* (Bately 1978; Keynes and Lapidge 1983: 275–81). Therefore whatever the origins of the sets of annals utilized in the *Chronicle* may have been, the common text up to 890×892 needs to be seen as an edited version that may well reflect the preoccupations of the scholarly circle around King Alfred. The potential for different layers in the composition of annal entries must be constantly borne in mind in discussion of the selection of entries that seem to throw light on the nature of fortification in Middle Saxon Wessex.

The Latin versions of the Old English *Chronicle* produced by Asser in 893 and by Ealdorman Æthelweard in the late tenth or early eleventh century provide further insights. Both authors provide information that is additional to the common text of the *Chronicle*. Asser incorporated ninth-century *Chronicle* annals up to the year 887 into his *Vita Alfredi*, often with additional details

(Campbell 2000; Keynes and Lapidge 1983: 48–58). He would have had the opportunity to acquire extra information from other members of Alfred's court who had lived through events before Asser joined it in *c.* 886. In addition, as Asser himself says, he personally visited the sites of some of the battles (perhaps, one might conjecture, in the company of war veterans). Although scepticism has been expressed about Asser's reliability, there seems no good reason not to believe him when he describes such visits (one of which is considered below). Many of Æthelweard's additional details may have come from his manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* whose Alfredian entries seem to have differed considerably from those of any other surviving version (Campbell 1962: xvii–xliv). Sir Frank Stenton (Stenton 1925) proposed that Æthelweard possessed original annals that were edited down for the common text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. However, other explanations are possible, and, as an ealdormen of the west country, Æthelweard may also have had access to independent traditions about the actions of his ninth-century predecessors preserved orally or perhaps added to a copy of the *Chronicle*.

What follows is a series of case histories drawn from the narrative sources that seem to throw light on the use of fortifications in Wessex immediately before and during the Viking attacks of the ninth century.

Meretun 786

An unusually long entry for the year 757 in the *Chronicle* includes an account of events that took place in 786 at the royal vill of *Meretun* when the ætheling Cyneheard attacked King Cynewulf of Wessex (757–86):

> In this year Cynewulf and the councillors (*witan*) of the West Saxons deprived Sigebert of his kingdom because of his unjust acts [...]. And when he had held the kingdom 31 years, he wished to drive out an atheling who was called Cyneheard, who was brother of the aforesaid Sigebert. Cyneheard discovered that the king was at *Meretun* visiting his mistress with a small following, and he overtook him there and surrounded the chamber (*bur*) before the men who were with the king became aware of him. [...] Then in the morning the king's thegns who had been left behind heard that the king had been slain. Then they rode thither [...] and discovered the atheling in the *burh* where the king lay slain — and they had locked the gates against them. [...] The atheling offered them money and land on their own terms if they would allow him the kingdom and told them that kinsmen of theirs, who would not desert him, were with him. They replied that no kinsman was dearer to them than their lord [...]. And they proceeded to fight around the gates until they broke their way in. (Whitelock, Douglas, and Tucker 1961: 30–31)

Fortifications are not explicitly described, but the implication must be that the site was contained within a defensive enclosure that was sufficiently formidable to deter Cynewulf's men from attacking anywhere except at the gates which had been locked against them. It would appear that the gates were considered the most vulnerable point of the circuit, and Cynewulf's men were eventually able to break in through them. The location of the *burh* of *Meretun* is not known, but it is probably the same place as the *tun* with an identical name that was attacked by Vikings in 871 (Whitelock, Douglas, and Tucker 1961: s.a. 871).

As putatively the earliest piece of substantial composition in Old English, and one that gives its chief protagonists a series of 'heroic' speeches, the episode has received much attention from Old English literary specialists (e.g., and for full references, White 1989; Kleinschmidt 1996). Its relatively simple and at times clumsy construction have been seen as supporting arguments for a relatively early date of composition, close to that of the events it describes. However, the preoccupations of the annal as a whole with good and bad kingship and conflicted loyalties to family and crown are ones that are to be found in the works produced in the scholarly circle around King Alfred at the time the *Chronicle* was being prepared for circulation (Yorke 2010). There has been much debate about whether the author's sympathies were with Cynewulf or Cyneheard, but the correct answer seems to be with neither, for both are shown as being at fault — Cynewulf for endangering his men while he dallied with a mistress, and Cyneheard for his attempted coup which also led to the deaths of many nobles who followed him. This episode, and the unsatisfactory reign of Sigebert that opens the annal entry, provided an opportunity to denigrate two of Alfred's eighth-century predecessors and to promote the role of the witan in organizing legitimate succession (a topic that had an essential part to play in Alfred's plans for the succession of his son Edward). *Meretun* in 786 may well have been contained within a defensive circuit, as the sequence of events seems to require, but the author of the passage, in the form we have it, may have written in consciousness of what such a site was like in the late ninth century (which may or may not have been the same as such a site in the late eighth century).

Reading 871

The *Chronicle* ascribes nine battles between the West Saxons and the Viking Great Army to the year 871, one of which was at *Meretun*, presumably the same place described as a *burh* in the 757 annal. Asser does not refer to the engagement at *Meretun*, but identifies most of the other sites where battles

were fought as 'royal vills' (*villa regia*). The *Chronicle* itself does not provide any details of the physical appearance of these sites, but Asser in his version (chap. 35) does give some useful information about the *villa regia* of Reading where Alfred and his brother King Æthelred I (865–71) led an unsuccessful attack on the Vikings who were in possession of the site. Alfred was to succeed to the throne later in the same year following the death of Æthelred, but at this point was only an ætheling, though (according to Asser, chap. 42) recognized as Æthelred's successor and his second-in-command, and led his own contingent of the West Saxon army (Stevenson 1959: 32–34).

> King Æthelred and his brother Alfred combined forces, assembled an army, and went to Reading. When they had reached the gate of the stronghold (*arx*) by hacking and cutting down all the pagans, whom they had found outside, the pagans fought no less keenly; like wolves they burst out of all the gates and joined battle with all their might. (Asser, chap. 36, in Keynes and Lapidge 1983: 78)

Asser here described Reading as an *arx*, a term which can be translated as 'stronghold' or 'fortification', but in Chapter 35 he referred to it as a *villa regalis*, a Latin equivalent for Old English *tun* (Stevenson 1959: 26–27; Sawyer 1983). Asser also says in Chapter 35 that the Viking force had constructed a *vallum* (rampart) on the southern side of the estate between the rivers Thames and Kennet (for plan see Astill 1984: 72). However, this may have been an addition to a site that was already fortified, for, in the account of the attack in Chapter 36, Reading seems to be protected in a similar way to *Meretun* in the annal for 757, that is with a full circuit of fortification that could be held against an enemy. At Reading in 871 some of the Vikings were evidently inside the fortification, as Cyneheard and his men were in the earlier account, and Alfred and his men were the attackers, though they had to fight their way to the fortification through other Viking forces. As in the account of *Meretun* in the 757 annal, the gates seem to have been the key feature. The Vikings inside took the initiative by bursting out through them and ultimately carried the day.

Cynuit/Countisbury 878

878 was a crucial year for King Alfred which began with him narrowly escaping capture by the Viking leader Guthrum at Chippenham (Wiltshire) and ended with the decisive defeat of Guthrum at the battle of Edington (Wiltshire). While Alfred was in retreat in the marshes of Athelney (Somerset), the *Chronicle* records the defeat of an additional Viking force in Devon. Few details

are provided, but Asser in Chapter 54 supplements the account with one of his longest additions to the *Chronicle* annals. Perhaps Asser was particularly interested in the fate of this Viking force because it had overwintered in his own home kingdom of Dyfed in Wales, no doubt to the considerable disadvantage of its inhabitants, including the religious community of St Davids to which Asser belonged (Stevenson 1959: 43–44). Asser names the place of the engagement as *Cynuit* which has been identified as Countisbury on the north Devon coast. Æthelweard reveals that the Saxon force was led by Odda, the ealdorman of Devon (Campbell 1962: 43).

> In the same year the brother of Ivar and Halfdane sailed with 23 ships from Dyfed [...] and came to Devon; there, acting on an erroneous assumption, he met an unhappy death with 1200 men, at the hand's of the king's thegns and in front of the stronghold (*arx*) at *Cynuit*. For many of the king's thegns with their followers, had shut themselves up for safety inside this stronghold; and when the pagans saw that the stronghold was unprepared and altogether unfortified (except for ramparts thrown up in our fashion), they made no attempt to storm it, since by the lie of the land that place is very secure from every direction except the east, as I myself have seen. Instead they began to besiege it, thinking that those men would soon give way, forced by hunger, thirst and the siege, since there is no water near the stronghold. But it did not turn out as they thought. For the Christians [...] burst out unexpectedly at dawn against the pagans and, by virtue of their aggressiveness, from the very outset they overwhelmed the enemy in large part, together with their king, a few escaping by flight to the ships'. (Asser, chap. 54, in Keynes and Lapidge 1983: 83–84)

Cynuit is described by Asser as an *arx* like Reading, and as 'poorly fortified' with the type of earthwork defences with which he was familiar from forts in Wales. It is generally assumed that he was referring to the site that survives as a small earthwork fort close to the coast, but possibly it was the more substantial site of the former Roman signal station known as Old Burrow (Fox and Ravenhill 1966). *Cynuit* was nevertheless sufficiently defensive for the Vikings not to consider attempting to storm it, and instead they settled down for a siege. Storming fortresses, particularly by attacking the gates, was evidently feasible in this period as the account of the attack on Cyneheard and his men at *Meretun* demonstrates. However, that account also shows that there was the potential for much hard fighting and loss of life to both sides which may explain the Viking reluctance to attack the fort at Countisbury head-on. If, the intention was that the Viking force from Wales would advance on King Alfred at Athelney and join with Guthrum's army to trap the king in a pincer movement (Smyth 1977: 248–49), it would have been essential to keep losses to a

minimum. However, the Anglo-Saxons inside followed the precedent of the Vikings at Reading and by unexpectedly bursting out from the defences won the day.

Athelney 878

While Odda was defending Countisbury, Alfred was sheltering in the Somerset marshes at Athelney where he had retreated following Guthrum's surprise attack on him at the royal vill of Chippenham earlier in the year. In Athelney he constructed what the *Chronicle* termed *geweorc*, Asser *arx* (Stevenson 1959: 44), and Æthelweard *firmitatem quodammodo*: 'something of a fort' (Campbell 1962: 42). This is one of the few entries in which the *Chronicle* and both Asser and Æthelweard refer to the same fortification so that their use of vocabulary can be compared directly. In a subsequent chapter Asser provides further details of the fort at Athelney.

> [Athelney] is surrounded by swampy, impassable and extensive marshland and groundwater on every side. It cannot be reached in any way except by punts or by a causeway (*pons*) which has been built by protracted labour between two fortresses (*arces*). A formidable fortress (*arx munitissima*) was set up by command of the king at the western end of the causeway. (Asser, chap. 92, in Keynes and Lapidge 1983: 103).

Asser inserts the description of the fortress at Athelney in a section on the monastery that Alfred founded after his defeat of Guthrum. However, it is probably correct to infer that the two fortresses were built in 878 when Alfred needed a secure refuge from his enemies. The western fortress is presumed to be Lyng which appears in the Burghal Hidage with the modest assignment of one hundred hides (Hill 1996b: 209–10). Athelney is not included in that document. Asser does not provide any details of construction, but the use of two fortresses to block a stretch of water between them sounds like an early prototype of the double burh which was subsequently used to great effect against Viking forces by Alfred and his children Edward and Æthelflaed.

Wimborne and Badbury 899 or 900

King Alfred died in October 899, and the *Chronicle* annal for 900 records the attempt by his nephew Æthelwold, the son of King Æthelred, to take the throne by seizing the royal residences (*hamas*) of *Twinham* (later known

as Christchurch in Dorset) and Wimborne (Dorset). Æthelwold was in Wimborne when he was opposed by his cousin, Alfred's son Edward, who was Alfred's intended heir. Wimborne would have been a site of particular significance for Æthelwold because his father, King Æthelred, through whom he derived his right to the throne, was buried there (Whitelock, Douglas, and Tucker 1961: 46), presumably in the church of the nunnery which had been founded by members of the branch of the royal house to which Æthelred and Alfred belonged (Whitelock, Douglas, and Tucker 1961: 27; Yorke 2010). Events are recorded in the annal for 900, but as the *Chronicle* year at this point began in September the events probably occurred in 899, the actual year (by our reckoning) of Alfred's death.

> Then the ætheling Æthelwold, his father's brother's son, rode and seized the *ham* at Wimborne and at *Twinham* (Christchurch), against the will of the king and his councillors (*witan*). Then the king rode with the army till he encamped at Badbury near Wimborne, and Æthelwold stayed inside the *ham* with the men who had given allegiance to him; and he had barricaded all the gates against him, and said that he would either live there or die there. Then meanwhile the atheling stole away by night, and went to the Danish army in Northumbria, and they accepted him as king and gave allegiance to him. Then the woman was seized whom he had taken without the king's permission and contrary to the bishops' orders — for she had been consecrated a nun. (Whitelock, Douglas, and Tucker 1961: 58–59)

Although the defences of Wimborne are not discussed in any detail, we are told that Æthelwold 'barricaded' (*forworht*) the gates and this, plus the fact that Edward did not immediately attack, suggests that Wimborne had some form of enclosure that could be held against him. Edward instead encamped at the nearby site of Badbury, presumably the prehistoric enclosure of Badbury Rings. One notes a tactic that Edward was to use several times to good effect in his campaigns in the Danelaw, namely occupying a fortress in close proximity to one held by an enemy thus effectively placing them under siege, though in this instance Æthelwold escaped by night.

There appear to be deliberate echoes in the 900 annal of the account of the attack of the ætheling Cyneheard on King Cynewulf in the annal for 757 (Bredehoft 2001: 61–63; Yorke 2010). These parallels enabled the compiler of the later annal to present Æthelwold's actions, like Cyneheard's, as an attempted coup by an ætheling against a legitimate king supported by the witan. Æthelwold's avowed intention to live or die at Wimborne (which he did not fulfil), recalls the heroic — but misguided — speeches given by the followers of both Cynewulf and Cyneheard at *Meretun*. Also notable is the reference

to the presence of a woman. References to women are so rare in the *Chronicle* that when they do appear one suspects a particular purpose behind them. In this case the attention may be to recall that it was desire to be alone with a woman that had left Cynewulf open to attack. These echoes make the events surrounding the two attempted coups appear superficially similar, but differences in detail — for instance, Æthelwold's woman was a nun and his reasons for removing her from the nunnery are not stated — encourage one to believe that the annal may also be a reliable record of events that had actually occurred. The relationship of the nunnery to the site occupied by Æthelwold is not clear, but they could have occupied different locations within a larger enclosure.

Sites in the Chronicle Texts and the Burghal Hidage

Apart from Lyng and Christchurch, which are mentioned briefly in the texts discussed above, none of the sites we have been considering were included in the Burghal Hidage. However, all of them seem to have been capable of being sufficiently strongly defended to deter an attacking force, even if (as is stated most clearly for Countisbury with its ramparts 'thrown up in our fashion') some consisted of only bank-and-ditch defences. The gates appear to have been the most vulnerable part of the defensive circuit, and it was around them that fighting often occurred. The potential loss of manpower involved in attempting to storm one of these strongholds seems to have had a deterrent effect. It would appear that, important though the Burghal Hidage is for understanding defence in ninth-century Wessex, it contains only a selection of the sites that were utilized in a defensive way in the reigns of Alfred and his brothers. The inclusion of some sites, and apparent rejection of other suitable locations, has often been seen as a puzzling feature of the Burghal Hidage. Why, for instance, was the fortress at Lyng included, but not that of Athelney when the two forts were part of an interlinked double burh?

One problem is that we know nothing, beyond what can be inferred from the text, about the exact context in which the Burghal Hidage was compiled. There has been uncertainty about whether its archetype dated to the reign of Alfred or that of Edward the Elder. It may have been, as Jeremy Haslam has proposed recently (Haslam 2006), drawn up to deal with a particular military situation in which it was necessary to provide an integrated defensive circuit around Wessex. Defensible sites may therefore have been chosen as much for their geographical location at regular intervals from each other as for any other reason (Hill 1969; Haslam 2006: 135–45). (Haslam 2006 favours the period

immediately following Alfred's defeat of Guthrum at the battle of Edington in 878, but there is not the space to consider his specific arguments here.)

Another way to approach the Burghal Hidage is through the implications of the assessments in hides allocated to each of its burhs. A formula included in the manuscripts of version A, explains how the hidage assessments were translated into lengths of wall and numbers of men to maintain and garrison them (Hill 1996a). The total number of hides allocated to the burhs of each shire bear a close relationship to the number of hides the shires are said to contain in Domesday Book (though that simple statement conceals a much more complex situation, for which see Brooks 1996 and Hinton 1996). One implication, if it is correct to assume that the number of hides per shire had already been established by the late ninth century, is that the number of hides available to support the Burghal Hidage scheme was finite. The Burghal Hidage refers only to the distribution of resources provided from hidated estates in each shire. However, shires also contained unhidated lands. Those we know most about were a class of royal estate, those contributing a farm-of-one-night, that were not given a hidage assessment in Domesday Book (Stafford 1980; Lavelle 2003). Manpower may well have been available from such estates to 'top-up' that from hidated lands. Kings would also have other resources. Asser says in Chapter 53 (Stevenson 1959: 41) that Alfred was at Athelney *cum quibusdam militibus et fasellis* 'with certain soldiers and "vassals"'. These may have been the *bellatores* that Asser tells us in Chapter 100 (Stevenson 1959: 86) were maintained by King Alfred. Perhaps they were responsible for the building and garrisoning of the burh at Athelney.

Whatever lay behind the compilation of the Burghal Hidage, it is apparent from narrative sources that it drew upon a larger reservoir of sites that had some degree of fortification. Both the Burghal Hidage and the non-Burghal Hidage forts consist of a range of disparate sites of different origins, and there are various ways in which they could be categorized. Both groups, for instance, include sites of prehistoric or Roman origin as well as fortifications that seem to have been specially constructed to counter the Viking threat. All these sites could be encompassed by the term *byrig* in Middle Saxon written sources and place-names, and the feature they shared is presumed to be a ditched or earthwork enclosure that could be used in similar military ways (Draper 2008). However, other terminology suggests that a contemporary distinction was drawn between Roman sites with stone walls and those of varying dates with timber and earth-work defences. The latter are commonly described in the *Chronicle* as *geweorc* or *fasten*; by Asser as *arx*, *castrum*, or *castellum*; and by Æthelweard as *castrum* (see Appendix). In contrast, Æthelweard was more likely to apply *arx* to a more

substantial Roman site, though he might also describe such a site as *urbs* or *oppidum*. Asser generally referred to a former Roman town as *civitas*, while in the *Chronicle* the favoured term was *ceastre*.

Another, perhaps more significant, categorization is that both Burghal Hidage and non-Burghal Hidage forts comprised some sites that seem to have been utilized simply as fortifications and which, although they may have housed garrisons temporarily, never seem to have been occupied permanently. These are sometimes referred to in connection with those in the Burghal Hidage as 'emergency burhs' (Brooks 1964; Haslam 2006: 136–39). In contrast are a range of what could loosely be termed 'central places' which had resident populations and fulfilled a range of functions besides the military. The defensive capacity of these sites may sometimes be alluded to in references to them in narrative sources, but more often a reference to them is qualified by an allusion to their wider role as a royal vill or residence (*tun/ham/villa regia*) (Sawyer 1983). Many of the sites in the latter group acquired mints in the later Saxon period and a raft of other features that characterized late Saxon towns (Blackburn 1996). A study of the development of fortifications in Wessex therefore cannot be entirely separated from another major Middle Saxon trend, namely the tendency for central place functions — royal, ecclesiastical, entrepreneurial, and defensive — to become centralized in a smaller number of towns. A chronological perspective will help dissect the intercutting trends of centralization and fortification.

When the Viking attacks on Wessex began in earnest in the ninth century, the West Saxons already possessed some defensible sites, including a range of prehistoric and Roman fortified sites. It would also seem to be the case that by the ninth century sites that were classified as royal vills (*tunas*), such as *Meretun* and Reading, were likely to have some form of gated enclosure that was capable of being held against attackers. Inferences from the texts seem to fit with the archaeological evidence for increasing enclosure of residences from the seventh century onwards (Reynolds 2003). Breaking into such enclosures could lead to a fine for *burh-bryce* in the laws of King Ine of Wessex (688–725) (Attenborough 1922: 50–51) that was calibrated according to status. The laws of Alfred also refer to *burh-bryce* and to the besieging of the home of an individual in order to bring him to justice (Attenborough 1922: 82–83), something which brings to mind the stand-off between Cynewulf's men and Cyneheard in the annal for 757. Unfortunately the early *Chronicle* annals are extremely limited and provide few additional details of internal warfare in Wessex, though there is a tantalizing entry in the annal for 722 recording Queen Æthelburh's destruction of Taunton which King Ine had built.

In the ninth century the Viking wars provided a new impetus for the building and utilization of defensive circuits. The Vikings themselves used existing enclosures in Wessex (and elsewhere) as temporary bases or built new ones as necessary (Dyer 1972). The West Saxons probably also made greater use of temporary fortifications because of, especially in certain periods, the ever present threat of Viking attack. The *Chronicle* account of Alfred's advance from Athelney to Edington in 878 records stopovers of one night at Ecgbert's Stone and Iley Oak. Asser adds that *castra* were made at both these sites (the *Chronicle* refers to the former as *wic*) (Stevenson 1959: 71). As Alfred was meeting up with contingents drawn from different parts of Wessex, it may have been necessary for more than one *castrum* to have been constructed at Ecgbert's Stone and Iley Oak. Guthrum meanwhile had built his own *arx/geweorc* to which he retreated after the battle (Bately 1986: 51; Stevenson 1959: 46). Asser and the compiler of the 878 annal in the *Chronicle* seem to assume that when the king moved around the country and a Viking army was in Wessex he would naturally defend his encampment for the night. The Vikings did the same. Potentially, the number of reused or newly constructed temporary fortified sites in ninth-century Wessex could have been quite considerable.

Observation of the Vikings in Wessex would have shown West Saxon military leaders the desirability of having some sites with stronger defences. The response included the refurbishment of a number of Roman towns. At Winchester, for example, a massive new ditch, that was doubled on the western approaches, was dug around the Roman walls which were presumably also refurbished (Biddle 1983: 119–26). Traces of Anglo-Saxon rebuilding of town walls have been identified at Exeter (Blaylock 1994). In addition, some sites were given fortifications that resembled those of Roman forts or towns in plan, but had substantial earthwork defences with timber revetments. Cricklade, Wareham, and Wallingford are the best recorded examples (Hill 1996b: 199–200, 219–21). The exact dates at which refurbishment or construction of these more substantial defences was begun are hard to establish. But this new phase of West Saxon fortification may have begun before the reign of Alfred and be associated with the reservation of fortress work in West Saxon charters in the reign of his brother Æthelbald (almost a century after its regular imposition in Mercian charters) (Brooks 1971). There is evidence that could suggest refurbishment of Winchester's defences began in the reign of Æthelbald and episcopate of Swithhun (852/3–63) (Yorke 1984; Biddle 2008), while Asser's description of Wareham as a *castellum* when the Vikings seized it in 876 suggests its impressive defences may have been provided by that date (Stevenson 1959: 46). However, the revived interest in Roman towns, and construction of

new sites with a Romanized appearance, is likely to have had a broader context than just the need to defeat the Vikings. That context includes the desire of West Saxon kings and bishops to emulate Frankish culture, the significance of Rome itself for Alfred's family (Irvine 2003), and a move to concentrate centralized functions in a smaller number of sites, particularly perhaps to aid the protection and exploitation of commerce.

The activities of the Vikings in Wessex in the 870s revealed some serious weaknesses in its defensive systems. In 876 the Vikings were able to evade the West Saxon army and install themselves in Wareham from which they could only be dislodged by negotiation and (probably) a payment of tribute (Whitelock, Douglas, and Tucker 1961: 48; Stevenson 1959: 36–38; Campbell 1962: 41). They eventually moved on, but only as far as Exeter. The *Chronicle* for 877 records: 'Alfred rode after the mounted army with the English army as far as Exeter, but could not overtake them before they were in the fortress (*faesten*) where they could not be reached' (Whitelock, Douglas, and Tucker 1961: 48). Neither of these sites would seem to have had a garrison within them that could prevent the Vikings from entering or engage them sufficiently to enable the main West Saxon force to catch up with them. In contrast, in 878, the presence of Odda and his forces within Countisbury was sufficient to halt the progress of a Viking army who presumably had hoped to be able to neutralize Odda's army before moving on. By breaking out unexpectedly, Odda gained the initiative and decisively defeated the enemy force. Presumably it was events such as these which inspired what seems to have been a significant development in the West Saxon defensive system when garrisons were installed in an integrated system of fortified sites as represented in the Burghal Hidage (Brooks 1979). The *Chronicle* account of warfare between 893 and 896 shows how the garrisons were used to great effect in the renewed warfare of that period. For instance, in 894 the *burgwara* of Chichester (a Burghal Hidage site) came out to successfully disperse a Viking force that was raiding in their vicinity. In 893, in contrast to 876 when they had apparently walked straight in, a Viking army mounted a siege in an unsuccessful attempt to try to take the burh of Exeter (also included in the Burghal Hidage).

The word *burh* was used relatively rarely in the *Chronicle* annals before 893, and the contexts of its use suggests it generally meant a defensive site that was garrisoned. It is tempting to conclude that it was around this date that Alfred initiated the idea of having some defensive sites permanently manned (Brooks 1979). The *Chronicle* annal for 892 records how a Viking fleet was able to row upriver because a *faesten* had not been completed. A reference in Asser's *Vita Alfredi* written at about the same seems to refer to the same incident (Stevenson

1959: 76–79). These dual accounts could imply a new initiative in the building
and garrisoning of fortresses *c*. 892 to which (as Asser indicates) there was some
resistance. On the other hand, 892 was the first occasion that Wessex had been
overrun by a Viking army since the defeat of Guthrum in 876 (which Haslam
2006 would see as the occasion for constructing the defensive circuit of Wessex
represented in the Burghal Hidage). When a Viking force came to Kent in 885,
they are said in the *Chronicle* to have besieged the *ceastre* of Rochester which
implies that there were men inside to defend the site. One must also bear in
mind that the annals for 893 to 896 were a continuation of the original com-
mon stock of the *Chronicle*, and were the work of a compiler whose vocabulary
and style of writing differed from that of earlier entries (Clark 1971: 221–24).
Therefore the introduction of the term *burh* in the *Chronicle* could be the result
of an individual author's choice of terminology.

     It does, however, appear that the deployment of garrisons in fortified cen-
tres in the 890s marked a significant advance from the West Saxon response
to the Vikings in the 870s and, arguably, was a major factor in their successful
resistance of the threat (Brooks 1979). However, the exact point at which new
demands for garrison-service were imposed in Wessex is less clear, and it may
be that it was imposed gradually over a number of years following the battle of
Edington. The Burghal Hidage contains arrangements for a defensive circuit of
Wessex, but a number of its sites seem to have been temporary or 'emergency'
burhs and were never occupied, or presumably defended, permanently (Brooks
1996; Haslam 2006). The 'burghal system' may have been constantly evolving,
and the manpower drawn from the hidated lands of the shire may have been
deployed differently from what is listed in the Burghal Hidage on other occa-
sions. Men could have been withdrawn from the temporary burhs and assigned
instead to major fortified sites in each shire, not all of which (for example,
Dorchester in Dorset) had been included in the arrangements recorded in the
Burghal Hidage (Hinton 1996).

Conclusions

A study of the references to fortifications in narrative sources for the ninth
century enables us to expand the number of defensive sites in use in Middle
Saxon Wessex and to put the initiatives enshrined in the Burghal Hidage into
a broader context. Stronger fortification and increasing use of garrisons within
a co-ordinated framework were important advances and responses to the
Vikings' own use of fortifications and methods of fighting but also grew out of a

longer tradition of lower level defensible capacity within Wessex. One message to archaeologists attempting to identify Middle Saxon defensive sites is that the pool may have been considerably larger than the sites referred to in the Burghal Hidage, and that any prehistoric or Roman fortified site or place used as a royal vill was likely to have a defensible capacity. One must also remember that we know far more about royal initiatives than those of their military commanders, the ealdormen. The role of ealdormen in directing defence within their jurisdictions in the ninth century has probably been underestimated because of the (deliberate) focus in the narrative sources on King Alfred. The *Chronicle* annals for the campaigns in the 870s do not name any ealdormen, and Asser's references are very restricted. It is possible, for instance, that Odda (named only by Ealdorman Æthelweard) may have placed watchers not only in Countisbury but in other Roman signal stations along the north Devon coast so that he could receive warning of the approach of just such a fleet. Some aspects of defence were directed from the centre, but it is also likely that ealdormen made their own decisions within their shires. Archaeological investigators should be open to the possibility of regional variation and local initiatives. Some aspects of defence in the Viking Age may be poorly recorded, as has been suggested for a system of warning beacons that is ignored in the narrative sources, but seemingly alluded to in charter boundaries (Hill and Sharpe 1997).

Written sources are obviously framed by their authors' knowledge and intent. Asser and the *Chronicle* compilers seem to focus on King Alfred's achievements to the detriment of wider appreciation of how defence was organized in ninth-century Wessex, but they were at least well-informed and interested in the use of defensive sites. In the case of Asser we know that he travelled with Alfred around Wessex as part of the royal household, and so would know from personal experience such things as the construction of temporary fortifications when the royal court itinerated. The compiler of the *Chronicle* annals for the 870s also shows something of the same interest and knowledge, and the compiler of the annals for the 890s shows an even stronger grasp of military detail and desire to specify use or construction of different types of fortress. These *Chronicle* compilers could have had similar backgrounds to Asser in the royal household, for instance, as royal chaplains.

The point emerges more clearly when the accounts of fortress-use in the annals for Alfred, Edward, and Æthelflaed are contrasted with those for the reign of Æthelred II in manuscript C of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The compiler of the account in C may have drawn upon annals kept contemporaneously (as the amount of detail within them seems to suggest) but has recast them with the benefit of hindsight. They provide one man's bitter analysis of

what had gone wrong within the Anglo-Saxon hierarchy and may have been deliberately written to contrast leadership roles of Alfred and Æthelred (Clark 1971: 224–31; Keynes 1986; Sheppard 2004: 71–93). The C annalist seems to be consciously mocking heroic ideals and making events the antithesis of what was recorded for the reign of Alfred as in his account of the ineffective-ness of Winchester's *burgwara* and the ironical reference to 'beacons' in the annal for 1006. The identity of the C annalist is unknown. He may have lacked the kind of experience of fortresses within a landscape of royal itineration that seems to have informed the work of Asser and the compilers of the ninth- and early tenth-century annals in the *Chronicle*, or such knowledge was not ger-mane to his purpose of apportioning blame. Therefore (in the absence of an Ætheldredan equivalent of the Burghal Hidage) archaeological and numis-matic evidence must be allowed full weight in showing that new fortifications were put in train during Æthelred's reign. The unfavourable contrasts often drawn between the reigns of Æthelred and Alfred in this respect may not be justified. This example is a reminder that the narrative sources have much to offer in the study of Anglo-Saxon fortifications, but always need to be read in the context of the individual circumstances of composition.

Table 4.1. Table comparing terminology of Anglo-Saxon and Viking fortifications within Wessex, 871–92, in *Chronicle*, Asser, and Æthelweard.

Annal Year	Place	*Chronicle*	Asser	Æthelweard
871	Reading		arx	castrum
876	Wareham		castellum	
877	Exeter	faesten	civitas	urbs
878	Athelney	geweorc	arx	firmitas, quodammodo
	Countisbury		arx	castrum
	Ecgbert's Stone	wic	castrum	
	Iley Oak		castrum	
	Fortification of Guthrum	geweorc	arx	
885	Rochester	ceastre	civitas	oppidum
	Viking fortifications at Rochester	faesten	castellum	castrum
892	Fortification in the Weald	faesten, geweorc		castrum

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Attenborough, F. L. (ed. and trans.). 1922. *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge)

Bately, Janet (ed.). 1986. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition; MS A* (Cambridge)

Campbell, A. (ed.). 1962. *Chroniconi Æthelweadi: The Chronicle of Æthelweard* (London)

Keynes, Simon, and Michael Lapidge (ed. and trans.). 1983. *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth)

Plummer, Charles (ed.). 1952. *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, with Supplementary Extracts from the Others: A Revised Text on the Basis of an Edition by John Earle*, reprinted with chronological note by Dorothy Whitelock, 2 vols (Oxford); first published 1892–99

Stevenson, W. H. 1959. (ed.). *Life of King Alfred; Together with the Annals of St Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser*, new impression with an article by Dorothy Whitelock (Oxford)

Whitelock, Dorothy, David C. Douglas, and Susie I. Tucker (ed. and trans.). 1961. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation* (London)

Secondary Studies

Astill, G. 1984. 'The Towns of Berkshire', in *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England*, ed. by Jeremy Haslam (Chichester), pp. 33–86

Bately, Janet. 1978. 'The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 60 B.C. to A.D. 890: Vocabulary as Evidence', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 64, 93–129

Biddle, Martin. 1983. 'The Study of Winchester: Archaeology and History in a British Town', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 69, 93–135

——, 2008. 'Winchester and King Alfred', unpublished lecture (Winchester)

Blackburn, Mark A. S. 1996. 'Mints, Burhs and the Grately Code, cap. 14.2', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 160–75

Blaylock, Stuart R. 1994. *Exeter City Wall Survey* (Exeter)

Bredehoft, Thomas. 2001. *Textual Histories: Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Toronto)

Brooks, Nicholas P. 1964. 'The Unidentified Forts of the Burghal Hidage', *Medieval Archaeology*, 8, 74–90

——, 1971. 'The Development of Military Obligations in Eighth- and Ninth-Century England', in *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge), pp. 69–84

——, 1979. 'England in the Ninth Century: The Crucible of Defeat', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 29, 1–20

——, 1996. 'The Administrative Background to the Burghal Hidage', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 128–50

Campbell, James. 2000. 'Asser's *Life of Alfred*', in James Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (Hambledon), pp. 129–55

Clark, Cecily. 1971. 'The Narrative Mode of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* before the Conquest', in *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge), pp. 215–35

Draper, Simon. 2008. 'The Significance of Old English *burh* in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 15, 240–53

Dyer, James. 1972. 'Earthworks of the Danelaw Frontier', in *Archaeology and the Landscape: Essays for L.V. Grinsell*, ed. by Peter J. Fowler (London), pp. 222–36

Fox, A., and W. Ravenhill. 1966. 'Early Roman Outposts on the North Devon Coast, Old Burrow and Martinhoe', *Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society*, 24, 3–39

Haslam, Jeremy. 2006. 'King Alfred and the Vikings: Strategies and Tactics, 876–886 AD', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 13, 122–54

Hill, David H. 1969. 'The Burghal Hidage: The Establishment of a Text', *Medieval Archaeology*, 13, 84–92

——, 1996a. 'The Calculation and Purpose of the Burghal Hidage', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 92–97

——, 1996b. 'Appendix IV: Gazetteer of Burghal Hidage Sites', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 189–231

Hill, David H., and Alexander Rumble (eds). 1996. *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (Manchester)

Hill, David H., and Sheila Sharpe. 1997. 'An Anglo-Saxon Beacon System', in *Names, Places & People: An Onomastic Miscellany in Memory of John McNeal Dodgson*, ed. by Alexander Rumble and David Mills (Stamford), pp. 97–108

Hinton, David A. 1996. 'The Fortifications and their Shires', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 151–59

Irvine, Susan. 2003. 'The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the Idea of Rome in Alfredian Literature', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 63–78

Keynes, Simon. 1986. 'A Tale of Two Kings. Alfred the Great and Æthelred the Unready', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 36, 195–217

Kleinschmidt, Harald. 1996. 'The Old English Annal for 757 and West Saxon Dynastic Strife', *Journal of Medieval History*, 22, 209–24

Lavelle, Ryan. 2003. 'The "Farm of One Night" and the Organization of Royal Estates in Late Anglo-Saxon Wessex', *Haskins Society Journal*, 14, 53–82

Reynolds, Andrew. 2003. 'Boundaries and Settlements in Later Sixth- to Eleventh-Century England', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 12, 98–136

Sawyer, Peter. 1983. 'The Royal *tun* in Pre-Conquest England', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. by Patrick Wormald, with Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Oxford), pp. 273–99

Sheppard, Alice. 2004. *Families of the King: Writing Identity in the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle'* (Toronto)

Smyth, Alfred. 1977. *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles, 850–889* (Oxford)

Stafford, Pauline. 1980. 'The "Farm of One Night" and the Organization of King Edward's Estates in Domesday', *Economic History Review*, 33, 491–502

Stenton, Frank Merry. 1925. 'The South-Western Element in the Old English Chronicle', in *Essays in Medieval History presented to T.F. Tout*, ed. by A. G. Little and F. M. Powicke (Manchester), 15–24, repr. in *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England: Being the Collected Papers of Frank Merry Stenton*, ed. by Doris Mary Stenton (Oxford, 1970), pp. 106–15

White, S. D. 1989. 'Kinship and Lordship in Early Medieval England: The Story of Sigebert, Cynewulf and Cyneheard', *Viator*, 20, 1–18

Yorke, Barbara A. E. 1984. 'The Bishops of Winchester, the Kings of Wessex and the Development of Winchester in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeology Society*, 40, 61–70

——, 2010. 'The Representation of Early West Saxon History in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', in *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Literature, History, Language*, ed. by Alice Jorgenson, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 23 (Turnhout), pp. 141–59

Wallingford: Place, Space, and Defence

Neil Christie with Oliver Creighton and Matt Edgeworth*

A key centre for exploring late Saxon burh defence and urban form is Wallingford in South Oxfordshire. Its location alongside the Thames at a crossing point exploited by the Norman forces in 1066 made this a significant point of investment, as reflected by the record of Wallingford's substantial size in the Burghal Hidage. Spectacular survival of the burh ramparts (Figure 5.1), combined with data from past and present excavations and surveys, enable close discussion of the character of defensive provision at Saxon Wallingford and assessment of its pre-burh role. Was this primarily a frontier foundation or a burh with planned specific urban and economic functions from its outset? What were the components of its plan and how far did these endure the transition to Norman rule?

Neil Christie is Reader in Archaeology at the University of Leicester. **Oliver Creighton** is Associate Professor in Archaeology at the University of Exeter. **Matt Edgeworth** is a researcher for English Heritage and Honorary Research Associate with the University of Leicester; he was the project officer for the *Wallingford Burh to Borough Research Project*.

Introduction

The late ninth-century translation of Orosius's *Universal History (against the Pagans)* — part of a busy programme of translation and dissemination of 'key' texts in a period of both changing continental ties and fluctuating military fortunes against the pagan Danes in England — contains an intriguing 'enrichment' of a passage regarding Julius Caesar's invasions of and march through Britain in the mid-first century BC, claiming that Caesar's third military encounter with the native Briton forces occurred after he crossed the Thames and 'near the ford which is called Wallingford' (Orosius, bk V, chap. xii; Thorpe 1853; Plummer 1902: 158; on literary output and continental ties under Alfred, see Nelson 2003 and Abels 1998: 186–93). Almost two hundred years later the same ford was prominent in another intruder's much longer-lasting impact on British soil when William of Normandy secured crossing of the Thames at Wallingford — presumably with the open support of the local Saxon thegn — to march

Figure 5.1. Aerial view of Wallingford with the Thames in partial flood.
The outline of the Saxon and medieval town and its ramparts is clear, with the extended earthworks of the castle to the bottom right (North is to the right of the image).
Image courtesy of the UK Environmental Agency, reproduced with permission.

Figure 5.2. Bullcroft, Wallingford: view of the extant rampart and ditch on the northern flank of the town — generally much overgrown and with established trees, the medieval town ditch normally continues in its role as space for rubbish dumping. Photo by N. Christie.

on and take London. William may possibly have heard of Caesar's forays at Wallingford and saw significance in his act — but probably not. The Alfredian claim of the Roman dictator's historic presence at the ford may have also held significance to the king — but probably not. Indeed, peculiarly, Wallingford does not register in the contemporary *Life of Alfred* by the monk-bishop Asser, nor in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as a focal point of conflict, siege, politics, or other. In contrast, of course, the early tenth-century Burghal Hidage document records Wallingford as a site of major note, comprising a burh of a full 2400 hides in value, matching royal Winchester in size and being at least double of the majority of sites listed.

This essay briefly explores the urban roots of Wallingford and its role in the ninth to eleventh centuries, and identifies how its surviving remains and an active programme of archaeological research can contribute to understanding the evolution of place and space there. Was the choice of burh site significant? Was a primarily military role envisaged? Or was its potential for urban, political, and economic development central? To tackle this we must first pursue a few historical problems.

Name and Place

The place-name and the events noted above give some guidance to the town's roots: as a ford and river crossing, giving access eastwards to the Chilterns and westwards to the Berkshire Downs. Dodgson's analysis of the Old English name's first element considered two possibilities: *Wealh* either as a personal name or meaning 'foreigner, Briton, Welshman'; or else Old English *wēl* or *wæl* 'deep pool', in reference to such a topographical feature. The noun *weall* — 'wall, rampart' — is not suggested, yet would be an interesting tie-in to the strong defences excavated and erected around Wallingford in the ninth century (Figure 5.2) (Dodgson 1996: 117–18, with his Appendix I on 'OE *Weal-stilling*' on pp. 176–77 of the same volume; note also the 'waledich' at Avebury henge, 'the ditch of the Britons' — Gillings and Pollard 2004: 101–12). Key to the location was the river Thames itself, which is broad but not overly so at this point in its course; Wallingford sits at the north end of a fairly long and flat north-south stretch, prior to the Thames's (upstream) course turning north-westwards towards Dorchester and then Oxford.

Place and Space

Previous analyses of the Burghal Hidage have done much to identify — and to question — the strategy and hierarchy of the sites listed and the potential chronologies of the listing. Wallingford belongs most probably to the programme of defence and territorial reconfiguration instituted under Alfred the Great from the 880s in Wessex, alongside contemporary efforts in western Mercia, to counter Viking Danish expansion or at least to provide secure mustering and supply bases and refuges (on disputed dating of the 'system', cf. Dumville 1992: 24–27; Davis 1982; Brooks 1964; Haslam 2006). David Hinton has stressed Wallingford's advanced position at the head of the shire of Berkshire, viewing this as not only defending Wessex's north-eastern frontier but also providing a bridgehead or stepping-stone for expansion into Mercia — a plan Edward the Elder subsequently pursued (Hinton 1996: 156–57). At the same time, references to dependent manors in Domesday Book show that Wallingford's properties extended beyond Berkshire into Oxfordshire and help to identify bonds that may have existed prior to the securing of the Wessex-Mercia border line (Hinton 1996: 153, with n. 9; and, more fully, Keats-Rohan 2009). Potentially the troubles of the 870s and 880s saw the combined creation of burhs and (re) defined shires, with Wallingford elevated to the head of Berkshire as a new

forward-looking site with the river as its focus. Indeed, Alfred can be seen to have recognized the need for fixed defences, to secure populations, to counter Danish advances, and to provide bases for troops; there is enough contemporary information — from Asser and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* — to show that forts were active, being built, or were planned, although the costs involved and renewed conflict would have done much to prevent completion of planned works. For our case-study, one can note how in 871 — when Alfred succeeded to the throne — fighting was rife in Berkshire, with two Viking armies using Reading as their base. Alfred recognized the Viking use of water as key, and his creation of new bridge forts on the Thames, including Wallingford and Sashes in Berkshire and east at Southwark-London, will have been essential steps in a secure defence (Hill 2003: nb. 229–33 on Alfredian burh or fortress building and planning in the 870s to 890s, including bridge-burhs and defended abbey sites; on Sashes as a gap-stop burh at Cookham see Brooks 1964: 79–81; see also Haslam 2006). If Wallingford is indeed Alfredian in origin, perhaps the association with the (freshly created/revived?) tradition of Caesar's crossing here was useful in moulding a new identity: this was a border zone contended between powers and was one where even the mighty Roman army had shown its martial prowess. It was even, much further back in time, the border between the late Iron Age groups and tribes of the Catuvellauni and Dobunni, as hinted at through finds from the river and ford (Henig and Booth 2000: 22–31; Booth and others 2007: 208).

A possible Mercian origin to the burh — not necessarily of the same dimensions as the Alfredian centre — might be envisaged given the wider landed connections of Wallingford noted above and given the creation of the nearby burh at Oxford perhaps already under Offa in the 780s (although the evidence for the latter is minimal, with the data pointing to a late ninth-century burghal foundation enclosing an earlier monastery). An earlier origin might also be claimed on the basis of marrying the calculations of Wallingford's documented circuit (from 2400 hides) with its actual defensive cordon, wherein a closer correlation is gained by using a shorter, Mercian rod length of 15 ft 3 in. (= 4.648 m) as opposed to the standard rod or perch of 16 ft 6 in. (= 5.029 m) which can be used with fair accuracy in the wall-length calculations for the majority of the Wessex burhs (Brooks 1996: 130–31. Reckonings of Wallingford's circuit and whether it features a 'bridgehead' across the Thames or includes the west Thames bank remain disputed). Alternatively, of course, we can propose architects and workers of Alfred's time simply working with the local Mercian rod size, yet to be replaced by them. Archaeology alone can determine the nature of the earliest burh on the site.

Scale-wise, Wallingford as documented in the Burghal Hidage denotes a centre of planned importance: as noted above, the reckoning of 2400 hides matches that of the late Saxon capital of Wessex, Winchester, and is otherwise nearly double, fully double, or even triple the size of other burhs — Oxford, 1400 hides; Bath, 1000; and, for Devon, former Roman Exeter is just 734 hides (Yorke 1995: 116–18). One might even ponder whether Alfredian Wallingford was a conscious aggrandizement of an older Mercian burh or at least a foundation designed to be grander than older, Mercian Oxford (cf. Dumville 1992: 24–27, who also notes on pp. 21–22 how, unlike in other shires, Oxford and Wallingford are dominant frontier seats, and how both Oxfordshire and Berkshire lack the listing of smaller internal forts evident elsewhere). The related garrison of 2400 men (though 'garrison' implies a fixed military force, which it would not have been) was, however, presumably a potential rather than real figure, perhaps realized only at crisis points and during campaign spells when mustering and wall-work and defence duties were activated (including for refugees). Royal appointees, reeves, and thegns will have been key in bringing together such forces and works. Brooks, notably, has estimated that perhaps more than one in every five able-bodied males would have been necessary to meet the manpower demands set out in the Burghal Hidage, whilst the mobile or campaign army drew upon yet more. A need thus existed to encourage settlement of the burhs to enable such military strategy to work (Yorke 1995: 121–22); but note that Astill (Astill 2000: 36–37) argues that 'one suspects that the impetus for specialised settlements lay entirely with the king's and the aristocracy's needs [...]. The connection between the aristocracy and the *burh* was not only economic, however, for this would underestimate the importance and size of the garrison, and that the king's thegns may have resided within the *burhs*'.

Such a choice of location obviously ignored Dorchester-on-Thames, a long-established royal centre and bishopric which had become a bone of contention in the mid-seventh century once the body and relics of the founding bishop Birinus had been relocated to the new West Saxon capital of Winchester in the 660s. This was Mercian space lying in a wider zone of contested control; the West Saxon founding of a rival abbey at Abingdon and then that of the Mercian minster of St Frideswide at Oxford in the 690s were part of the religious and political jostling for the region; indeed, this whole region, including north Wiltshire and west Berkshire, saw much disruption and many changes of control between the later seventh and ninth centuries (Yorke 1995: chaps 2 and 3). Although there is evidence to suggest that in the 750s Dorchester saw renewed activity, the Mercian kings Æthelbald and then Offa came to favour Oxford, quite probably because of the greater defensibility of the site (facing

Wessex) across the channels of the Thames here (Hassall 1986: 109–10; Dodd 2003: 13–19, 31–35). However, currently the archaeology is slight for anything pre-tenth century at Oxford's burh, and tracing a possible Offa-period fortified bridgehead is not possible. This counters Haslam's (Haslam 1985: 20) claim that the 'earliest defences of Oxford, Tamworth, Hereford, Winchcombe and Nottingham can be dated to the middle Saxon period (i.e. before about 850)' and the 'long causeway [at Oxford] across the Thames valley to its south [...] [is dated to] the late eighth century — to which the construction of this defensive system can be assigned'. Dorchester is postulated as a late and sub-Romano-British central place, perhaps with adjacent hill-forts like Wittenham Clumps reactivated as part of a wider landscape control; continuity of this as a place of significance of course comes from the subsequent West Saxon royal seat and Mercian bishopric as well as the strong scattering of earlier Saxon cemeteries in the zone, including Long Wittenham and Wallingford itself (Henig and Booth 2000: 190–94; Booth and others 2007: 378–80). A 'ford of the Britons' at Wallingford might then fit into a context of British and Saxon confrontation on the upper Thames valley. (On the Long Wittenham burials, featuring a high concentration of male 'warrior' graves, see Booth and others 2007: 168, 179; Akerman 1860 and Akerman 1863.)

But Wallingford may also have had a religious pre-burh focus that prompted or at least played a role in determining the siting of the burh and its status and size. The first key guide to this is what appears to have been a fairly sizeable later fifth- and sixth-century Anglo-Saxon burial ground which was located immediately outside the south-western flank of the later rampart in the area of St John's Road and St John's Primary School. Burials were first identified in the late nineteenth century with ten or eleven more uncovered during construction of the school in 1910; 24 further graves were revealed between 1924 and 1938, which included excavations formally conducted by E. T. Leeds and C. Musgrove (Leeds 1938; Meaney 1964: 52–53; Booth and others 2007: 96). Additional finds have emerged since, relating to both cremation and inhumation burials. Preliminary reanalysis of the cemetery finds confirms known links with artefacts and communities elsewhere in the Upper Thames region including Frilford (Hamerow and Westlake 2009; Booth and others 2007: 171–95; Booth 2009; Hawkes 1986). The evidence points to a settled community, not necessarily larger than an extended family over a number of generations, with indicators of moderately high status including traded items, such as several high quality saucer-brooches (cf. Inker 2006). Typically such cemeteries and communities were drawn to existing or remnant Romano-British farms or larger units, and, whilst not substantial, sufficient scattered finds of Roman material from the site of

Wallingford are known to suggest the presence nearby of a fair-sized farm or villa. Earlier Bronze and Iron Age finds also signify a flow of activity in this zone. Support for pre-Roman and Roman period usage of the ford is provided by topographic traces of a routeway running largely north-north-west to south-south-east, first documented in the mid-thirteenth century as Port Way, which can be traced on the east side of the Thames cutting across the Grim's Ditch and heading directly to the area of the presumed ford and early bridge. This route then proceeds across the castle site by way of, it seems, the medieval north gate towards Dorchester via Shillingford. Otherwise Roman roads are only known both west and east of Wallingford, but the route of the Port Way reinforces the hypothesis of a pre-Saxon origin for the use of the ford. The role of this putative Roman road may have faded once the burh was created, enforcing a new west-to-east route which better suited the West Saxon kingdom's defensive strategy and which further sidelined Dorchester. (We might note in passing only the antiquarian claims, such as by William Camden in 1607, that Wallingford was the site of the Roman town of *Calleva* — though Victorian and modern excavations of course firmly site this at Silchester: cf. Henig and Booth 2000: 203. It is likely that the wealthy Hedges family, who owned the castle and grounds at Wallingford from the earlier part of the nineteenth century, sought to enhance the status of Wallingford and its possible Roman roots through 'discoveries' of Roman artefacts — Hedges 1881. The postulated Roman Port Way remains to be tested archaeologically. For Roman-period settlements and communications, see Chapters 3 and 4 in Henig and Booth 2000).

The chronological gap between the early Saxon cemetery and the later Saxon burh is potentially filled if one argues for an intervening secular or monastic estate at Wallingford. The most likely candidate is St Leonard's church, occupying a striking position in the south-eastern angle of the burh. One suggestion is to view St Leonard's as a chapel originally attached to an estate centre which subsequently gained additional religious functions, or as a monastic foundation from the outset. At present, there is a lack of evidence to support either contention. While Victorian rebuilding of the church has made the task of reading the earliest fabric problematic, herringbone work (Figure 5.3), remnants of narrow single-light windows, and traces of a former apse/nave offer strong hints of a secure pre-Norman building (see Tyack, Bradley, and Pevsner 2010: 574, and Christie and Creighton forthcoming, chap. 7). Only excavation might reveal evidence for a mid-Saxon origin, but the topographical relationship between the church and the earlier cemetery not far to the west perhaps reflects the development of an early Anglo-Saxon community, a transition in belief, an elevation in site status, and then a refocusing of settlement and landed display.

Figure 5.3. Herring-bone work and blocked features on the north wall of St Leonard's church.
Photo by N. Christie.

The extent of the parish of St Leonard's, south and west of the burh's ramparts may imply roots predating the fortress-town. Further speculation might place putative mid-Saxon settlement near an alternative ford which perhaps too featured a defensive aspect or lay on a territorial boundary part-employed in the later burh. Such a putative estate and church may then have been a prompt in the Alfredian burghal foundation. Evidence is needed to understand the specifics of the St Leonard's site, but further research must also include other cemeteries and estate structures in the territory of later Wallingford (for detailed assessment of churches and parishes here, see Dewey 2009; and see Christie and Creighton forthcoming).

Julia Barrow has argued for a distinction between Wessex and Mercia with regard to the role of religion in the burhs:

Alfred and Edward the Elder, probably largely responsible for choosing sites of *burhs* in Wessex, disapproved of powerful churches in them, except nunneries [...]. In western Mercia, Aethelred and Aethelflaed often encouraged a plurality of major churches inside fortified urban sites [...]. The movement of relics from eastern to western England, and the building of new churches in which to place them, were an important feature of Aethelflaed's policy of urbanization [...] to create a sense of identity for each town. (Barrow 2000: 130–31)

In contrast, Blair has observed that, 'It is striking that some two-thirds of the defended sites listed in the Burghal Hidage either contain or adjoin minsters, including such places as Cricklade, Wareham and Oxford where the bank and ditch have plainly been positioned to encapsulate an existing minster and its precinct' (Blair 2000: 253; Blair 1994: 61–66 and 146–48). Yet Wallingford is not a documented minster in the mid-Saxon period, despite such centres along the Thames, including Oxford, Abingdon, Dorchester, Reading, Sonning, and Cookham (Booth and others 2007: 247–56). This last is noteworthy, since it was the site of *Sceaftesege*-Sashes listed in the Burghal Hidage and which, like Wallingford, features a ford, a Roman river crossing, and nearby early Anglo-Saxon activity; Cookham's minster, documented in the late eighth century, had been variously held by King Cynewulf of Wessex (757–86) and King Offa of Mercia (757–89). As Barrow indicates, however, many of these minsters must be viewed in the context of southwards Mercian expansion in the later seventh to mid-eighth centuries. As suggested above, Wallingford was not a Mercian focus, with Dorchester and Abingdon favoured instead. We cannot of course exclude a manor and associated church at Wallingford in this same period, but its status may not have been high; it is noticeable, however, that Wallingford's burh was created on lands given or appropriated from the large (former Mercian?) royal estate centred on Benson across the Thames to the north-east, which may also argue against any pre-existing high status centre at Wallingford (Barrow 2000: 132; but see also the discussion in Keats-Rohan 2009).

With the rise of Wessex, the influx of the Danes and the presumed reconfiguration of territories and boundaries in the later ninth century, Wallingford's role and status became considerably enlarged. If indeed there was a church or monastery at St Leonard's in the mid-Saxon period this would undoubtedly have been elevated in status with the creation of the royal burh which enclosed the church in its defensive circuit (see Figure 5.4). And yet this is a period when many minsters were diminished in status due to warfare and increasing secular and royal power, manifested by the building of local estate churches and the fragmentation of large mid-Saxon estates, particularly by the granting of land by royal charter. Late Saxon churches at places like Wallingford or Cricklade
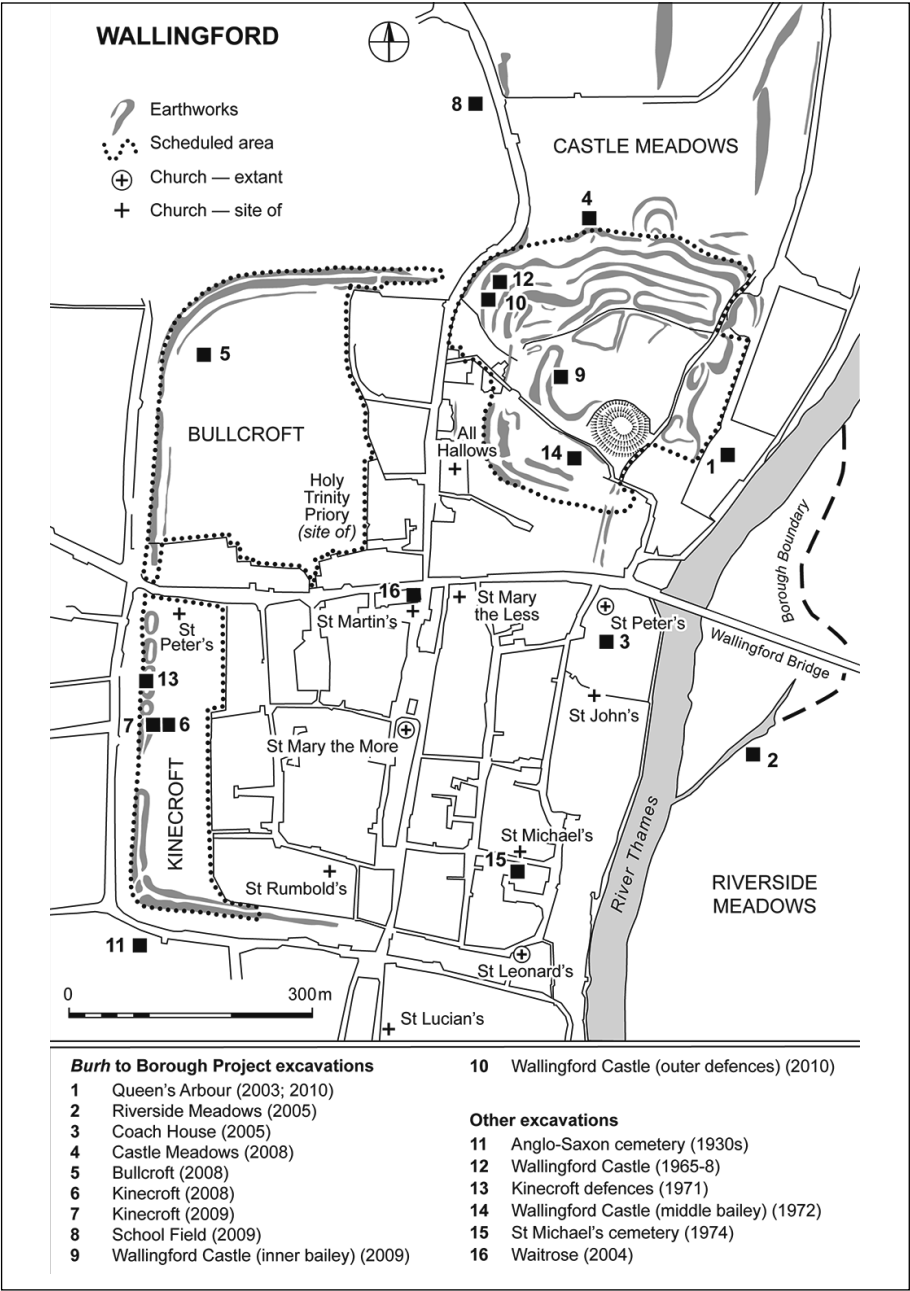
Figure 5.4. Wallingford town plan, denoting extant and lost monuments and sites of excavations.
Map by M. Rouillard.

need not be viewed as powerful institutions in their own right, although there would very likely have been jostling for prominence within urban places as the major burhs developed internally and aristocracies developed property including their own churches (Cf. Morris 1989: chap. 5, nb. 197–204 on Wallingford, noting the emphasis in the town's southern and south-eastern spaces; Foot 2006: 340–45 on minster decay).

A final topic to consider is Wallingford's development as an urban centre. The occupation of urban space by thegns, the related construction of churches or private chapels, promotion of urban markets, including in many cases the operation of a mint, can all be seen as part of the process of urbanization of the burh (see Astill 2000 and Astill 2006 arguing for a delayed urbanization). How quickly did such processes take place? Defences, streets, and space for animals, refugees and soldiers are all key components of burhs, especially the larger ones: Wallingford and Cricklade are prominent examples. Size, ordered plan, ordered space, investment in ditches and ramparts, and in communications, clearly reflect a desire for Wallingford to become a central place, centre of its shire and key to controlling of this section of the Thames, both militarily and economically. Perhaps the military role was primary, with the layout and size dictated by a planned or perceived role in its shire. As noted above, Wallingford may have been designed as a bridgehead, with space for mustering of troops, storage of grain and victuals as well as animals. With the dissipation of the Viking threat, however, scope existed for the economic development of the town. Thus, we might note, the mint of Wallingford seems to have been activated only from the 920s, when the moneyer Bernwald transferred to Wallingford from Oxford under Æthelstan (AD 924–39) — or most probably late in the preceding reign of Edward the Elder (a mint is, in contrast, attested at Oxford in the 890s: Blackburn 1996: 163–65).

Archaeologies Old and New

Much of the above discussion is necessarily speculative, working around scattered data often not specifically related to Wallingford. This situation is the case for the majority of burhs, the few exceptions being Oxford, Winchester, Bedford, Stafford, and Northampton which have seen substantial archaeological scrutiny. Even in some of these cases, the archaeology is largely fortuitous, and includes a patchwork of developer-led small- and medium-scale interventions. Sites like Cricklade, Lydford, and Wareham have tangible survivals in terms of plans and ramparts but lack associated below-ground archaeology.

Wallingford exhibits a range of physical evidence from minor interventions and larger explorations, both recent (for example the Waitrose development excavated by Northamptonshire Archaeology and awaiting publication of the many burials recovered) and older works (notably unpublished excavations by Nicholas Brooks at the castle and the town's north gate area in 1965–68 and by Bob Carr in the inner bailey in the 1970s).

Wallingford offers much more potential than most other burghal sites. The substantial survival of almost half of its earthen rampart and ditch (best preserved on the flanks of the Bullcroft (see Figures 5.1, 5.2, 5.4) standing in places to 7 m high from ditch base to top of eroded bank); planform evidence for the burh streets (most prominently in the southern half of the town); and the availability of two substantial intramural spaces (Bullcroft and Kinecroft in the western part of the town, Bullcroft being the location of the lost Norman priory). Extensive earthwork remains of the Norman and medieval royal castle, planted over the north-eastern quarter of the burh, reused and reconfigured the burh ramparts and dominated the north gate, river, and bridge.

These physical survivals have been examined in detail in a major project exploring the form and evolution of one of the planned Alfredian/Wessex burhs. Building on pilot work in 2001–05, the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded *Wallingford Burh to Borough Research Project* (2008–10) has applied an array of techniques and approaches to explore both intramural and extramural spaces through geophysical and topographical survey, excavation, garden or test-pit archaeology, and buildings analysis. The research covered the period *c*. AD 800–1300 and thus also considers Norman urban remodelling and the onset of medieval urban decline at Wallingford. Specific questions relating to pre-Norman urbanism were addressed. For example, what form did the burh defences take and how did they evolve? How developed was the burh street plan? How densely was the intramural space occupied? Was there suburban occupation and when did this begin? What role did the river play in urban defence and economics? When does an 'urban' character fully emerge? And how does that impact on the surrounding landscape? In addition, a major issue is whether a Middle Saxon presence can be identified.

Whilst the final report is forthcoming (Christie and Creighton forthcoming), it can be highlighted how the project provided total geophysical mapping of the Bullcroft and Kinecroft intramural spaces which has, perhaps surprisingly, revealed minimal urban occupation of these plots. Excavation in the Kinecroft and castle areas has uncovered clear evidence of twelfth-century activity (a fairly short-lived timber house, yard space and a related lane in the Kinecroft, a chalk-built quay structure in Queen's Arbour linking castle to
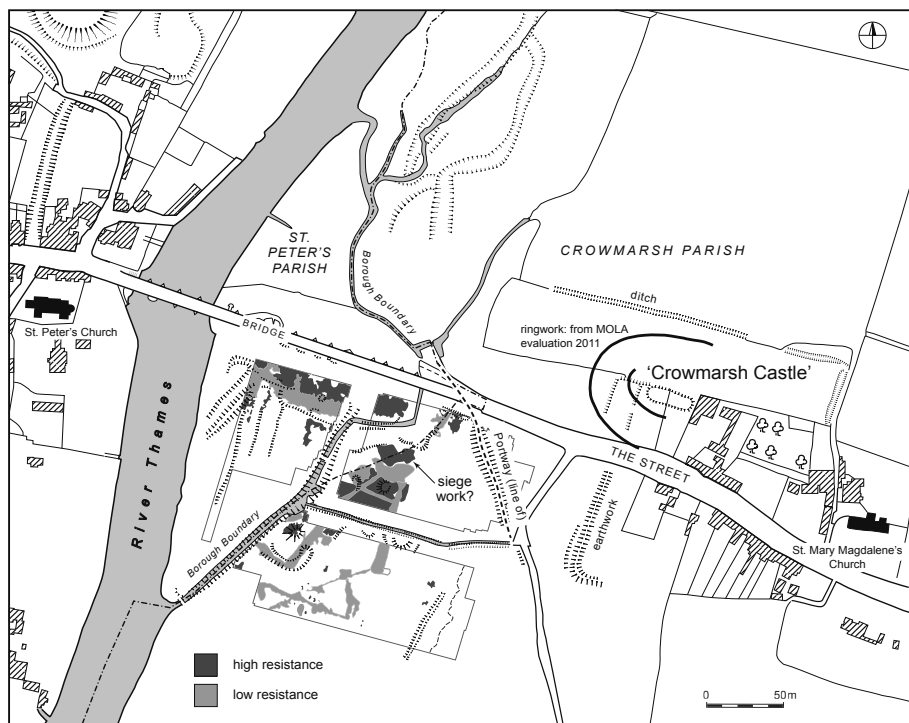
Figure 5.5. Plots and interpretative outline of geophysical and topographic survey, plus developer-led work at Riverside Meadows, with traces of Anarchy period siege works outside the ditch of the possible burh bridgehead defences on the east bank of the Thames. Map by O. Creighton and M. Rouillard.

river), and a potential siege motte (see Figure 5.5) in Riverside Meadows across the Thames, perhaps to be associated with the Anarchy period of the 1140s in which Wallingford played a prominent and well documented role. Study of archive data from unpublished excavations has, meanwhile, clarified pre-Norman activity near the town's North Gate, whilst re-analysis of the mint's coin output reveals an early prominence for the tenth- and eleventh-century burh.[1]

Written evidence for Wallingford's early development is unlikely to reveal further insights. Archaeology, however, has great potential to provide substan-

---

[1] See Christie and others 2003 and Christie and others 2004 for pilot study investigations; for interim results from the AHRC-project see Christie and others 2009 and Christie and others 2010, plus the project website <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/archaeology/research/projects/wallingford> [accessed 25 April 2013].

tial tangible evidences relating to late Saxon Wallingford's form and evolution, its local and regional economic relationships and the status of its inhabitants before William I exploited the burh's key role at a ford on the River Thames.

Works Cited

Secondary Studies

Abels, Richard. 1998. *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (London)

Akerman, J. Y. 1860. 'Report on Researches in an Anglo-Saxon Burial Ground at Long Wittenham, Berkshire', *Archaeologia*, 38, 327–52

——, 1863. 'Report on Further Researches in an Anglo-Saxon Burial Ground at Long Wittenham, Berkshire, in the Summer of 1860', *Archaeologia*, 39, 135–42

Astill, Grenville. 2000. 'General Survey, 600–1300', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, I: 600–1540*, ed. by David M. Palliser (Cambridge), pp. 27–49

——, 2006. 'Community, Identity and the Later Anglo-Saxon Town: The Case of Southern England', in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, ed. by Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 15 (Turnhout), pp. 233–54

Barrow, Julia. 2000. 'Churches, Education and Literacy in Towns, 600–1300', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, I: 600–1540*, ed. by David M. Palliser (Cambridge), pp. 127–52

Blackburn, Mark A. S. 1996. 'Mints, Burhs and the Grately Code, cap. 14.2', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 160–75

Blair, John. 1994. *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (Stroud)

——, 2000. 'Small Towns, 600–1270', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, I: 600–1540*, ed. by David M. Palliser (Cambridge), pp. 245–70

——, 2005. *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford)

Booth, Paul. 2009. 'The Archaeology of the Wallingford Area before the Anglo-Saxon Burh', in *The Origins of Wallingford: Archaeological and Historical Contributions*, ed. by K. S. B. Keats-Rohan and David Roffe, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 494 (Oxford), pp. 1–4

Booth, Paul, and others. 2007. *The Thames through Time: The Archaeology of the Gravel Terraces of the Upper and Middle Thames. The Early Historical Period: AD 1–1000*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monographs, 27 (Oxford)

Brooks, Nicholas P. 1964. 'The Unidentified Forts of the Burghal Hidage', *Medieval Archaeology*, 8, 74–90

——, 1996. 'The Administrative Background to the Burghal Hidage', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 128–50

——, 2003. 'Alfredian Government: The West Saxon Inheritance', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 153–74

Christie, Neil, and others. 2003. 'The Wallingford Burh to Borough Research Project: 2002 Interim Report', *South Midlands Archaeology*, 33, 105–13

——, 2004. 'The Wallingford Burh to Borough Research Project: 2003 Interim Report', *South Midlands Archaeology*, 34, 94–103

——, 2009. 'New Directions in Tracing the Origins and Development of Wallingford: Targets and Results of the Wallingford Burh to Borough Research Project', in *The Origins of Wallingford: Archaeological and Historical Contributions*, ed. by K. S. B. Keats-Rohan and David. Roffe, British Archaeological Reports, British Series 494 (Oxford), pp. 68–76

——, 2010. '"Have You Found Anything Interesting?" Exploring Early Medieval and Medieval Urbanism at Wallingford: Sources, Routes and Questions', *Oxoniensia*, 75, 35–47

Christie, Neil, and Oliver Creighton, Matthew Edgeworth and Helena Hamerow. Forthcoming. *Transforming Townscapes. From Burh to Borough: The Archaeology of Wallingford, AD 800–1400* (London).

Creighton, Oliver, Neil Christie, and Matt Edgeworth. 2009. 'Wallingford', *British Archaeology*, 106, 36–41

Davis, Ralph Henry Carless. 1982. 'Alfred and Guthrum's Frontier', *English Historical Review*, 97, 803–10

Dewey, Judy. 2009. 'The Origins of Wallingford: Topography, Boundaries and Parishes', in *The Origins of Wallingford: Archaeological and Historical Contributions*, ed. by K. S. B. Keats-Rohan and David Roffe, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 494 (Oxford), pp. 17–26

Dodd, Anne (ed.). 2003. *Oxford before the University: The Late Saxon and Norman Archaeology of the Thames Crossing, the Defences and the Town*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monographs, 17 (Oxford)

Dodgson, John McN. 1996. 'A Linguistic Analysis of the Place-Names of the Burghal Hidage', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 98–122

Dumville, David (ed.). 1992. *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural and Ecclesiastical Revival* (Woodbridge)

Foot, Sarah. 2006. *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600–900* (Cambridge)

Gillings, Mark, and Joshua Pollard. 2004. *Avebury* (London)

Hamerow, Helena, with Susan Westlake. 2009. 'The Early Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Wallingford', in *The Origins of Wallingford: Archaeological and Historical Contributions*, ed. by K. S. B. Keats-Rohan and David Roffe, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 494 (Oxford), pp. 13–16

Haslam, Jeremy. 1985. *Early Medieval Towns in Britain* (Princes Risborough)

——, 2005. 'King Alfred and the Vikings: Strategies and Tactics, 876–886 AD', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 13, 122–54

Hassall, Tom. 1986. 'The Oxford Region from the Conversion to the Conquest', in *The Archaeology of the Oxford Region*, ed. by Grace Briggs, Jean Cook, and Trevor Rowley (Oxford), pp. 109–14

Hawkes, Sonia Chadwick. 1986. 'The Early Anglo-Saxon Period', in *The Archaeology of the Oxford Region*, ed. by Grace Briggs, Jean Cook, and Trevor Rowley (Oxford), pp. 64–108

Hedges, John K. 1881. *The History of Wallingford in the County of Berks: From the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the Present Time*, 2 vols (London)

Henig, Martin, and Paul Booth. 2000. *Roman Oxfordshire* (Stroud)

Hill, David H. 2003. 'The Origin of Alfred's Urban Policies', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 219–34

Hinton, David A. 1996. 'The Fortifications and their Shires', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 151–59

Inker, Peter A. 2006. *The Saxon Relief Style*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 410 (Oxford)

Keats-Rohan, K. S. B. 2009. 'The genesis of the honour of Wallingford', in *The Origins of Wallingford: Archaeological and Historical Contributions*, ed. by K. S. B. Keats-Rohan and David R. Roffe, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 494 (Oxford), pp. 52–67

Leeds, Edward T. 1938. 'An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Wallingford, Berkshire', *Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 42, 93–101

Meaney, Audrey L. 1964. *A Gazetteer of Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites* (London)

Morris, Richard. 1989. *Churches in the Landscape* (London)

Nelson, Janet L. 2003. 'Alfred's Carolingian Contemporaries', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 293–310

Plummer, Charles. 1902. *The Life and Times of Alfred the Great: Being the Ford Lectures for 1901* (Oxford)

Story, Joanna. 2003. *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c. 750–870* (Aldershot)

Thorpe, Benjamin. 1853. *The Life of Alfred the Great*, trans. by Reinhold Pauli (London)

Tyack, Geoffrey, Simon Bradley, and Nikolaus Pevsner. 2010. *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* (New Haven)

Yorke, Barbara. 1995. *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (London)

Military and Non-Military Functions of the Anglo-Saxon Burh, *c.* 878–978

Gareth Williams*

Any attempt to discuss the relationship between the burh and civil defence in Alfredian and post-Alfredian England immediately faces fundamental questions concerning the definition of terms. First and foremost of these is 'what is a burh?' It is important to recognize from the outset that the Old English word *burh* had a variety of meanings, some of which were very general, while others would appear to have been more specific and technical. While sometimes it is clear from the context in which sense the term is being used (or, in the case of some place-names, has survived), the looseness of definition in the word itself means that without sufficient context, it is difficult to tell how the word is being used in any specific instance, and this need not necessarily imply a military structure (Baker, this volume; see also Draper 2008). As discussed in more detail elsewhere in this volume by Barbara Yorke, Latin terminology can be equally problematic. *Arx*, *civitas*, *urbs*, and *villa* could all be used to translate *burh*, depending on context, but unfortunately the use of these terms is not entirely consistent, with different terms being used at different times to describe the same place. Any attempt to view all references to *burhs* as if they all mean the same thing is doomed to failure, but the variety of terminology combined with the apparent inconsistencies of

* The following abbreviations will be used throughout this essay: ASC (*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, from Swanton 1966); Asser (Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, from Keynes and Lapidge 1983); EHD (*English Historical Documents*, Whitelock 1979); Liebermann (*Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, Liebermann 1903); S (charter number from Sawyer 1968).

Gareth Williams is Curator of Early Medieval Coinage, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum.

usage suggest that the question of whether or not a particular place was considered to be a *burh* may depend on the precise circumstances in which the reference was made, and to the specific function of the settlement in question in that particular context. *Arx* implies a fortification, *urbs* a town, *civitas* a centre of royal authority (and usually a former Roman town), and an individual *burh* might be all of these things, or some, or only one. In the case of *burhs* for which more than one description is used, we have to consider the context — does the description refer to the specific function relating to that particular context? Equally, if one specific function was dominant, then habit might lead a scribe to use the relevant description in a less relevant context, through force of habit. Or we may simply read too much into varying terminology for a phenomenon which may have been of rather less interest to the Anglo-Saxon scribe than to the modern scholar.

The focus of this essay is on the royal burh (although excluding the personal burhs of kings, such as the burh at *Meretun* within which Cynewulf was attacked in 757), but even the royal burh is subject to a number of variables, such as changes in the economy, in the nature and extent of royal authority, and in the nature and extent of external threat. There may be core functions which royal burhs share, but not all of these elements would necessarily be present in any given burh at any given time. This essay will begin by looking at the functions of the burh, then at external influences and parallels, and finally at the development and expansion of the West Saxon burghal system between *c.* 878 and 978.

In doing so, we also need to recognize that civil defence is also an ambiguous term. It could be interpreted as defence of the population as a whole, or of the participation of the general population in defence work, or a combination of the two. Any of these interpretations immediately begs the question of the relationship between civil defence and royal authority. Defence of the people was a core royal function and justified to a great extent the increasing attempts by kings to monopolize and control 'legitimate' involvement in warfare (Halsall 2003: passim). At the same time, the development of military obligations owed by the wider population was a key tool for the extension of royal authority, and for the development of the monopoly on power referred to above. This essay will argue that it is the gradual extension of both royal authority and royal responsibility that is key to our understanding of the burh, but while the external impetus that permitted this extension may have been military, the developments in authority, and in the function of the burh, which followed included a number of non-military aspects.

Military Functions: The Early Burhs

This brings us to the functions of the burh. From a military perspective, there were a number of these, although all relied to some extent on the fact that a military burh was a fortified site, and that siege technology in England in this period was rudimentary and largely ineffectual. The first function, and one which has received particular attention in the context of the network of burhs listed in the document known as the Burghal Hidage, is the role of the burh in the defence of the population as a whole as a refuge in time of war. This role is explicitly stated in a charter reference to the construction of the burh at Worcester 'for the protection of all the people' (S 223; EHD: 99), and there is no reason to doubt that the same principle applied to other burhs as well. It is often commented that within the area covered by the Burghal Hidage, the spacing of the burhs meant that nobody was ever more than one day's travel away from one, and that it was therefore relatively easy for the population to retreat to the safety of a burh when threatened by Viking attack. This is probably true to some extent, although the value of the system in this respect would depend on a number of factors: the existence of an effective early warning system; the ability of the civilian population to outdistance pursuit by Viking forces well known for their mobility; the assumption that civilians of all ages and in all states of health could travel twenty miles (about thirty kilometres) in the course of a day; the assumption that Vikings had the inclination, resources, and time to scour the countryside between burhs for civilians, most of whom were unlikely to be worth robbing; and the assumption that most civilians regarded it as preferable to travel all day with the prospect of facing a siege rather than hiding in their immediate localities, with which they were probably considerably more familiar than countryside up to twenty miles away. None of these factors is immediately apparent in the historical sources, and it seems unlikely that defence of the civilian population per se was the only, or even the major, function of the burhs.

However, the close network of burhs found in the Burghal Hidage had another military function, and one more directly related to campaigns by and against the Vikings, as reflected in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and other contemporary accounts. This is the role of the burh as fortified supply dump. One of the difficulties for any army in the field is supply, and the limitations of transportation in the Middle Ages made it extremely difficult for armies to move quickly without separating themselves from their supply trains. Mobility and surprise seem to have been key elements in Viking strategy, but this often meant separating fast-moving armies from established supplies, probably relying on

the ability to forage on the march, and targeting wealthy estate centres for raiding not simply because of the plunder that they offered but also because they were places which possessed significant food reserves. This logistical consideration was a key element in the strategy of the *micel here*, underpinning their ability to maintain forces in hostile territory for years at a time (Williams 2008d: 198). This was a high-risk strategy, and Alfred's burhs seem to have been central to defeating it. By placing supplies out of reach within fortifications, Alfred denied the Vikings the opportunity to resupply without first taking the fortifications, while the limited supplies available also meant that it was difficult for Viking forces to maintain a lengthy siege. At the same time, stored supplies within the burhs permitted the resupply of the West Saxon field army anywhere within the kingdom, thereby making it more mobile, while the proximity of neighbouring burhs meant that if one burh was attacked, garrisons from the surrounding area could potentially combine to relieve the siege within a day or two (Abels 1988: 69; Abels 1997).

This strategy relied on burhs being effectively defended, and an incomplete or poorly defended burh was a target in itself, as in the case of the attack on an unnamed burh in Kent in 892, occupied only by a few-peasants, and half-built (ASC A *sub* 893 [892], and E *sub* 892). However, the *Chronicle* accounts of the latter part of Alfred's reign suggest that Alfred was largely successful in controlling supply, through a combination of the burhs and reorganization of the *fyrd*, and that his ultimate success in defending Wessex owed more to starving out the Viking forces than to success in battle.

In addition to supply, the burhs had a wider role in controlling mobility. Mobility for large forces in this period continued to be dominated by Roman roads, together with the network of smaller roads and paths which fed into these, and the possible link between some of these smaller roads and military organization is discussed elsewhere in this volume by Richard Abels. In addition to roads, the use of Viking fleets (and in particular the shallow draft of their ships) meant that transportation and access were also possible from the coast and along navigable rivers. The burghal network visible in the Burghal Hidage, which was presumably extended by similar burhs in Kent, provided control of all of the main access routes across greater Wessex, with individual burhs controlling major road junctions, ports, and river mouths, and a line of burhs preventing access by ship along the Thames (Abels 1988: 70–73). Burhs could block access along road or river, and even if it was possible to bypass the fortification, doing so meant risking that the garrison might sally, taking the bypassing force from behind.

The importance of the burh garrison has already been mentioned, and the garrisoning of the burhs also represented a significant development in both military organization and royal authority. The figure of one man per hide in the Burghal Hidage, giving a total garrison force for the burghal network of 27,070, is much higher than those suggested by any other source relating to military obligations in Anglo-Saxon England (Abels 1988: 77; Brooks 1996: 128). No other source gives such a detailed record of the calculation of Anglo-Saxon military obligations, and most of those that do survive refer to more general duties in the field army (*fyrd*/*expeditio*) or to unspecified bridge-work and fortress work (which may include garrison duty as well as construction/repair), rather than to responsibilities to serve in specific garrisons. It is important to remember that Alfred's burghal obligations were apparently in addition to the wider duty to serve in the *fyrd*, rather than a replacement for it (Abels 1988: 68, 76–77).

In his 1988 account of the evolution of Anglo-Saxon military obligations, Richard Abels argued persuasively that the focus of early Anglo-Saxon military obligations was personal lordship, rather than a general obligation on the part of the 'folk' as a whole to bear arms, and that it was only gradually over a period of centuries that kings were able to extend their authority over other lords into regular and permanent military obligations set down in charters for posterity. Abels further argued that pre-Alfredian warfare was carried out on a relatively small scale, and that active military service (as opposed to support duties) was largely if not completely restricted to a wealthy elite. Both positions have largely been followed and expanded by more recent commentators, both in an Anglo-Saxon context and as a wider approach to early medieval warfare in general (e.g. Halsall 2003; Tyler 2005; Williams 2001; Williams 2002; Williams 2005). Within this model, the earliest phase of Anglo-Saxon warfare was undertaken by individual warlords (who might or might not also be kings) and bands of followers who looked to them for personal lordship. The development of more specific obligations tied to landholding through charters did not entirely replace this approach but merely extended royal authority over these war bands by introducing another layer of lordship, that between the major landholders and the king himself, while at the same time kings used the extension of written law to monopolize control of 'legitimate' violence, thereby limiting (at least in theory) the ability of individual lords to use their warbands for personal advantage rather than in the service of the king (Halsall 1998b: 7–16). In practice, in order to be able to carry out the military service due to the king, lesser lords needed to continue to equip and maintain followings in proportion

to their landholdings, and this left them considerable scope for independent action and even, on occasion, to challenge the authority of the king, as seen in the episode of Cynehelm and Cyneheard, the disputed succession to Alfred in 899, or the repeated internal conflicts in the kingdom of Northumbria in the late eighth and ninth centuries.

The establishment of service owed to specific burhs represented two important changes. Firstly, the numbers involved must indicate that military service now extended further down the social hierarchy beyond a narrow elite. We do not have reliable figures for the total population of Wessex at the time, but the burghal garrisons must have represented a substantial proportion of the adult male population. In the sense of 'civil defence' as defence by the general population, there can be little doubt that the obligations of the Burghal Hidage meant that a large part of the population who would never previously have had a formal engagement in warfare were now required to defend the burhs and, by extension, the kingdom. The burden of building and maintaining the burhs presumably fell most heavily even lower down the social scale. Secondly, the obligations were directly to the burh, and through the burh to the king. It is not always clear from context what is meant by the term *burh-ware* (men of the *burh*), and like the term *burh* itself it probably meant different things at different times. The Burghal Hidage tells us nothing of how the garrison was selected but only the calculations in terms of the total assessment for each burh. However, as the burden of garrisoning the burhs was assessed on the basis of hidage, and the hidage required to support the burhs involved whole shires, then the great landowners must have been involved in the process in some way, and ties between landholding, lordship, and military obligation no doubt formed important elements in the selection and outfitting of many if not all of the garrison. The Worcester charter of *c.* 889–99 indicates the vested interests of both the ealdorman and the bishop in the burh (S 223; EHD: 99; Sawyer 1978: 229; Brooks 1996: 143; see further below). At the same time, the fact that some of the burhs appear to have been planned as towns from the beginning means that we can reasonably assume that this also meant the beginnings of a permanent urban population, with properties and ties to the burh itself rather than to rural estates and their lords, although we lack contemporary evidence for exactly what rights and obligations the first inhabitants of the burhs may have had. By the time of Domesday, burhs were normally owned by the king, and the majority of the population were direct tenants, answerable to the king's reeve rather than to individual landowners (Sawyer 1978: 205–06), and it is not unreasonable to assume that this situation can be projected back to the foundation of the burhs, although this cannot be certain. Nevertheless, the

creation of substantial garrisons directly answerable to the king and his offi-cials provided a balance to the continued role of what were effectively private warbands within the *fyrd* and a substantial development in the nature of royal authority.

The extension of military obligations at this time may have been a product of necessity, but the development and enforcement of such obligations both required and reinforced royal authority. There are parallels here with Timothy Reuter's interpretation of the extension of Frankish military obligations at the beginning of the ninth century (Reuter 1985; Reuter 1990), and I have argued elsewhere for a more general model, in which a combination of royal author-ity, administrative capacity, shared national or regional identity, and external threat were requirements for the development of defensive military organiza-tion in the early Middle Ages (Williams 2001; Williams 2002). While the level of threat faced by Alfred was not unique, the situation had been brought home to the West Saxon population by the conquest of the other Anglo-Saxon king-doms, and by Alfred's own near capture. One may also argue that other rulers, and even Alfred himself before the victory at Edington, lacked the authority to impose such a system. Alfred still faced recalcitrance when the system was introduced, and Asser (chap. 91) was typically able to draw a moral story from the calamitous fate of those who had not begun, or who had failed to complete, their work on the burhs before the resumption of Viking raiding (Abels 1988: 76). Nevertheless it is a tribute to the authority of both Alfred and his suc-cessors that the burghal system eventually did become firmly established and was gradually extended northwards in the course of the tenth century as the West Saxon dynasty extended their territorial control. As the burghal system expanded, it also developed, but since the developments reflect non-military as well as military functions, they will be considered in a later section.

Non-Military Functions of the Burh

As planned centres under royal authority, the burhs had a variety of civil roles reflecting that authority. In the surviving written record, these are particularly apparent from the reign of Æthelstan onwards, and while Æthelstan was certainly an innovator in some respects, it seems likely that elements of the civil functions observable from Æthelstan's reign were inherited from his predecessors.

One of the most publicly visible expressions of royal authority was coinage (Figure 6.1). The imagery and inscriptions on coins were clear statements of royal identity, even if they are not always reliable evidence for the full extent
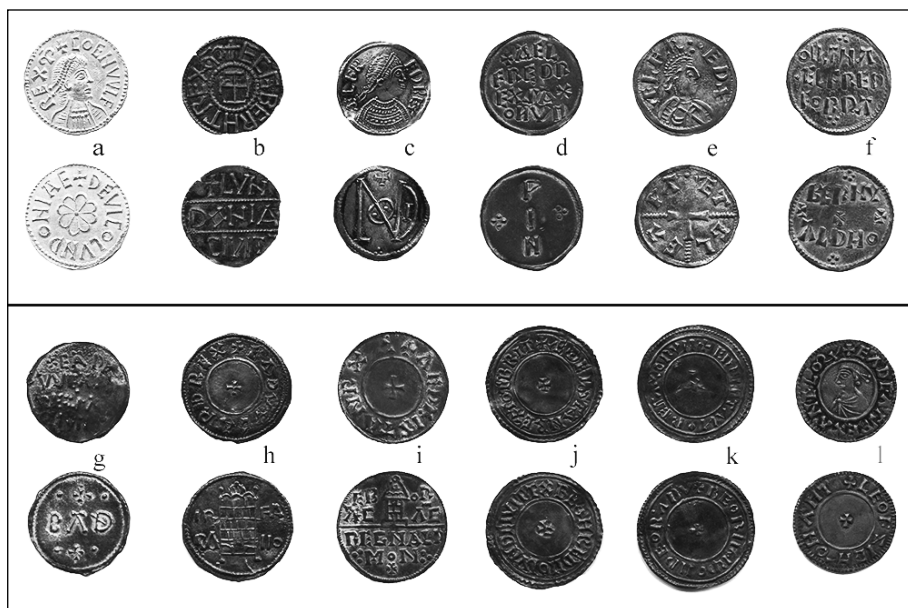
Figure 6.1. Anglo-Saxon coins reflecting burghal status: a) Gold mancus of Coenwulf, *De vico Lundoniae*; b) Silver penny of Ecgberht, *Lundonia civit*; c) Silver penny of Alfred, *Lundonia*; d) Silver penny of Alfred, Winchester type; e) Silver penny of Alfred, Gloucester type; f) Silver penny of Alfred, Oxford type; g) Silver penny of Edward, Bath type; h) Silver penny of Edward, Building type; i) Silver penny of Æthelstan, Building type; j) Silver penny of Æthelstan, Rex totius Britanniae type, minted in London; k) Silver penny of Æthelstan, Rex Saxorum type, minted in Derby; l) Silver penny of Edgar, national type, minted in Northampton. Photo by G. Williams.

of royal authority. Many (although not all) coins carried the name of the burh in which they were minted, or at least in which the moneyer was based, and at certain points in the period in question, the mint name was an integral part of the coin design. Alfred's surviving laws do not mention minting, but we can see some links between minting and burhs from the coinage itself. Alfred's most extensive burghal coinage was produced in London, and carries a monogram of the name LVNDONIA on one side, and a stylized Roman imperial bust on the other, together with Alfred's name and title. Alfred is described on these coins simply as REX, rather than as REX SAXONVM, as on some other types. While this type has in the past been linked with the restoration of London in 886, it now seems more likely to celebrate Alfred's assumption of authority over the Mercian burh of London after Ceolwulf II of Mercia quietly disappeared from the historical record *c*. 879–80, although Alfred and Ceolwulf appear to have shared minting rights in London during Ceolwulf's reign (Blackburn 1998;

Blackburn 2003: 212–17; Blackburn and Keynes 1998; Keynes 1998; Williams 2008c: 56–57). The burghal status of London is not explicitly mentioned on the coins, although it had been described on coins earlier in the ninth century as both *vicus* and *civitas* (see below). A much rarer issue from Gloucester probably also celebrates Alfred's assumption of authority over a Mercian burh, as does another distinctive issue from Oxford. Relatively few examples survive of official issues of the Oxford type, but the extent to which it provided a model for Danelaw imitations suggests that the official coinage was also fairly substantial. A variant form of Alfred's final two-line type gives him the title REX DORO, which is taken to be an abbreviated form of *Dorovernia*, the Latin name for Canterbury (Archibald 1991: 286). Canterbury had been the traditional centre of minting in Kent, under independent Kentish kings and under both Mercian and West Saxon overlords. The REX DORO coinage is a useful reminder that although the Burghal Hidage does not mention Kent, this does not mean that there were no important burhs there.

It is the last two burhs which appear on Alfred's coins that perhaps give the greatest indication of the relationship between West Saxon burhs and minting. Coins of the same type were issued at both Exeter and Winchester (Archibald 1991: 287). On these, Alfred is given the title REX SAXONVM, while the other side carries an abbreviated form of the name of the mint. While these are the only two mints currently represented in the type, examples of both are sufficiently rare that it remains possible that examples from other mints will be discovered in future. A related burghal type, also extremely rare, is recorded from Bath early in the coinage of Edward the Elder (Lyon 2001: 75). Because such coins are so rare compared with other coin types of Alfred and Edward, it seems unlikely that they ever functioned as part of a widespread burghal coinage. Either they represent examples of aborted attempts to introduce such a coinage, or they were special issues of some sort, perhaps created to celebrate the completion of the defences at specific burhs. Nevertheless, the fact that minting can be seen across a range of different burhs in Alfred's reign prefigures later developments in minting practice. The two-line type which dominated the later years of Alfred's reign generally did not mention specific mints, but on the basis of stylistic variations it seems likely that this was also minted in several burhs, both in Wessex and Mercia (Blackburn 1996: 163; Blackburn 2003: 207–08).

The spread of minting to a range of different burhs continued under Edward the Elder, as the West Saxon kingdom expanded to take in East Anglia and much of Mercia. However, while regional styles can be identified within Edward's coinage, indicating that minting must have been devolved to

the regions, very few coins carry mint signatures, so the relationship between minting and burhs is largely inferred, rather than established fact (Lyon 2001: 72–77). The relationship is more clear-cut in the reign of Æthelstan. The law code known as the Grately Code states that 'no one is to mint money except in a town', and goes on to specify the number of moneyers permitted in different burhs, where this was two or more, with a general catch-all of 'otherwise in the other boroughs one' (Liebermann 1903: ii Æthelstan 14.2). The term *port* or *porte* is used in the first reference, but *burg* in the second, and it is clear from the context that the two are perceived as equivalent. The linkage with burghal status is made even clearer by the insertion of a clause on the maintenance of fortifications between related sections on trade and minting (Liebermann 1903: ii Æthelstan 12–14). The Grately code was enacted somewhere in the period AD 926–30, but it has been suggested that the block of six chapters on trade and commerce, which includes the chapter on minting, was inserted *en bloc* from another source and may therefore be earlier (Blunt 1974: 40–41; Blackburn 1996: 167; Lyon 2001: 72; Screen 2007: 154–55). However, it is striking that the relationship between burhs and minting becomes more explicit on coins of Æthelstan's *Rex Totius Britanniae* type, thought to have been introduced in the wake of Æthelstan's meeting with the northern kings at Eamont Bridge in July 927. This introduced a more or less national type, on which the king's name and title were given on one side, and the name of both the moneyer and the burh in which he was based on the other, with a much wider range of mints represented on the coins than those specifically listed in the Grately code (Figure 6.2). It is the identification of moneyers with specific mints in this coinage which allows the attribution of the same moneyers to the same mints in the coinage of Edward the Elder (Lyon 2001: 71–72) as well as in the early part of Æthelstan's reign. Presumably (at least initially), these were covered by the 'in the other boroughs one' clause, and this is reinforced by the fact that some quite major burhs, such as York, certainly only did have a single moneyer for much of the reign (Archibald and Blunt 1986). The burghal status of some of the mints is clearly indicated by the fact that the mint name is qualified by *urbs* or *civitas* rather than by giving the place-name alone (Blunt 1974: 45). The coinage shows at the same time the central authority of the king in the late Anglo-Saxon state and the devolution of that authority on a more local level. Although the national coverage of this coinage was apparently incomplete, and collapsed on the death of Æthelstan, various mint-signed issues were struck by Anglo-Saxon rulers before the more permanent reintroduction of a very similar national coinage in the latter part of the reign of Edgar, conventionally attributed to *c.* AD 973 (Jonsson 1987).
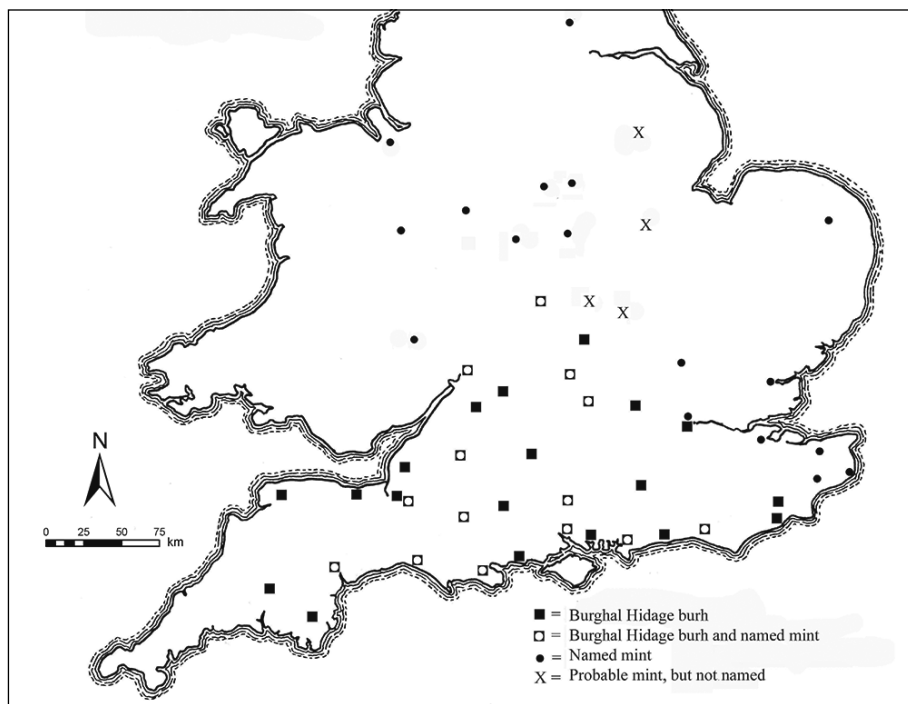
Figure 6.2. Mints of Æthelstan compared with burhs from the Burghal Hidage. Map by G. Williams.

While considerably more anonymous, the two-line types of Alfred, Edward the Elder, and the early part of Æthelstan's reign probably already represent the same trend, although since only the moneyer's name is given, it is unclear exactly how many burhs were involved. The importance of burhs may also be recognized on two other groups of coins which generally lack mint signatures. A group in the name of Edward the Elder showing either a Roman-style camp gate or an Anglo-Saxon tower may perhaps be related to the expansion of the burghal system in western Mercia before AD 920, while a short-lived type from the mid-920s, struck at York and a number of unnamed mints, appears to celebrate Æthelstan's assumption of authority over the burhs of Northumbria and the Midlands in AD 927 after the death of Sihtric I, but before the introduction of the national *Rex totius Britanniae* type (Williams 2011a; Williams forthcoming).

Specific reference to the mint towns on coins was only sporadic in the decades which followed Æthelstan's death. However, some mint signatures survive, together with observable regional styles, and the identification of individual moneyers with mint signatures on some coins means that the coins of

these moneyers can be attributed with some certainty even where the mint signature is not given. It is therefore clear that the link between burhs and minting was maintained throughout this period, although it was not to be consistently explicit on the coins again until the coinage reform of Edgar, conventionally dated to *c*. AD 973, although there is no direct evidence to associate the reform with any specific year. Edgar's reform reintroduced the concept of a single national style, with the king's name and title on one side, and the name of the moneyer and mint on the other, and this model was then followed, through a series of type changes, for the rest of the Anglo-Saxon period and beyond. The most striking differences between this and Æthelstan's coinage are that the number of burhs issuing coins had increased significantly, and also that all but the smallest burhs had two or more moneyers in the later Anglo-Saxon period. (For a survey of the post-reform mints, see Metcalf 1998.)

It is perhaps significant to note that several of the smaller burhs of the Burghal Hidage did not become mints. Although the possibility of minting at these burhs cannot be entirely ruled out in the two-line types of Alfred to Æthelstan, the absence of these smaller burhs from Æthelstan's national type probably indicates that those burhs had never been more than fortifications, which may or may not still have been in use by Æthelstan's time. This serves as a useful reminder that all burhs were not necessarily equal. It is also interesting to note that the numbers of moneyers specified in the Grately code for specific burhs (or even the presence of minting activity, as witnessed by bthe coins themselves) is not in proportion to the size of the burhs as indicated in the Burghal Hidage (Blackburn 1996: 165). The economic significance of individual burhs was thus not directly related to the size of the fortifications.

If not all burhs were mints, it is likely that the same applies to some of the other functions of the burh in the tenth century. The Grately code also specifies that no transaction above twenty pence was to take place except in a town (Liebermann 1903: II Æthelstan 12). This reflects a modification of an earlier law of Edward which specifies that nobody was to trade at all except in a town (Liebermann 1903: I Edward I), which was apparently felt to be too restrictive by Æthelstan's time. The intent to regulate and extend royal authority over trade is apparent from Alfred's time, and probably dates back further, to the earlier law codes which underpin Alfred's own. This emphasis on royal authority over trade is clear both in Alfred's laws and in the treaty with Guthrum (Liebermann: 126–29; Keynes and Lapidge 1983: 171–72), but it is interesting that neither mentions burhs. References to the 'king's vill' seem more likely to refer in this context to a royal estate centre than a town, although the term is ambiguous. Thus the role of the burh in the regulation of trade must date

from late in Alfred's reign, or early in that of Edward, an interesting point given the ongoing uncertainty over how far the Burghal Hidage reflects Alfred's own time and how far that of his son.

Æthelstan's limitation of transactions of twenty pence and above may well have been aimed at livestock, and particularly at cattle, to judge from contemporary prices (also set by law) (John 1980: 176; Screen 2007: 157–60). An individual ox (30 d) or cow (20 d) would be covered by the provision whereas a pig (10 d) or sheep (5 d) would not. Much trade in other commodities must have passed below this threshold, but even the limitation of twenty pence seems to have been problematic, as later law codes of Æthelstan specifically tell us that the clause was repealed, together with the ban on Sunday trading (Liebermann 1903: VI Æthelstan 10). This may reflect the fact that regulation of trade based around the closely grouped burhs of southern England was considerably less practical in the north where burhs were much fewer and farther between (see below).

The burh also acted as a focus for the exercise of justice, with the burh-court functioning alongside the hundred court and the shire court in the law codes of the tenth century. The law codes have little to say about the precise remits of the different courts, and it is likely that much of the work of the burh-court related to the functions of the burh already mentioned, with military obligations, coinage, and trade all relating directly to the burh. However, a recurrent theme in Anglo-Saxon law codes is the sense of a unified approach to maintaining law and order, with related crimes grouped together with breaches of the law arranged in hierarchies of the seriousness of the offence in any given breach of the law. A similar hierarchy of courts would reflect this, with jurisdiction based on how widespread and severe the impact of any breach of the law might be. This idea is reflected in the Wantage code of Æthelred II, which covers a sliding scale of breach of the peace, from the king's own peace, through five burhs, down to a single burh, down to one wapentake, down to a single alehouse (Liebermann 1903: III Æthelred 1–1.2).

This concept of maintaining peace is central to Anglo-Saxon law and fits into a more widespread idea in early medieval Europe that maintaining peace within the kingdom was a primary responsibility for the king, however aggressive he might be in warfare beyond his own borders (Halsall 2003: 18–19). In this respect, the distinction between maintaining law and order and defensive military levies was merely a matter of scale. Halsall has argued that one can identify a sliding scale of violent activity, often reflected in early medieval warfare, from petty robberies and fights to full-scale warfare (Halsall 2003: 15–16). It is precisely this sort of gradation of illegitimate violence that the opening chapters of the Wantage code seeks to address. Richard Abels (Abels

2003) has made a similar point concerning the attitude of Viking raiders in the ninth and tenth centuries: their description as a *here*, rather than a *fyrd*, reflects a similar gradation of criminal violence in the law code of Ine, in which *here* is the largest specified group of peace-breakers, at thirty-five or more. The fact that *here* is normally translated as 'army' (the equation with Ine's laws leading to a serious under-estimation of the size of armies in the period) demonstrates the continued difficulty of maintaining a clear distinction between violent crime and warfare. The king was both the defender of the kingdom and the maintainer of peace. Below that, the ealdormen and other officials were military leaders but were also responsible for presiding over the different layers of courts and for the exaction of royal dues (Sawyer 1978: 195). In the same way, the men who attended the courts at hundred, burh, or shire level were responsible, when called upon for maintaining law and order, and it is hardly surprising that these same structures also played their part in military organization, bringing us back to the concept of civil defence. As noted by Richard Abels, 'an armed action to maintain the king's peace did not differ materially from an expedition against the king's enemies' (Sawyer 1978: 197–99; Abels 1988: 89).

Detailed discussion of shires and hundreds/wapentakes lies beyond the scope of the current essay, but it seems clear that together with burhs they formed a tiered structure, based on hidation, which contributed to the equitable distribution of both military service and taxation, which was also coupled with a shared social obligation to uphold and enforce the law and maintain the peace in support of the appointed officials responsible for each district. Although the principle of hidation as a basis for land assessment appears to date back to the seventh century and certainly to the eighth, valuations in hides were not necessarily static, reflecting not only changes in the productivity of land over time, but also changes in the severity of the assessment, and hidage could, and did, change over time. Hidage figures are available for the Tribal Hidage (whenever one wishes to date that) and charters, as well as for the Burghal Hidage, County Hidage, and the shire assessments in Domesday. There is a reasonable correspondence between the shire figures for the southern shires in Domesday and the Burghal Hidage figures for the major burhs which survived until Domesday (but excluding the short-lived minor burhs), and this suggests that the shire figures were already broadly established by the time of the Burghal Hidage (Sawyer 1978; Brooks 1996: 129–38; Brooks 2003: 158–60). The West Saxon shires appear to have been established by the mid-ninth century and were certainly inherited, rather than created by Alfred (Brooks 2003: 153–55). The shire structure seems to have been central to the organization of the West Saxon *fyrd* and probably played a large part in Alfred's

ability to resist the Vikings, even before the introduction of the burhs. This is particularly apparent in his ability to muster an army of 'all the men of Somerset and Wiltshire and that part of Hampshire which was on this side of the sea' (ASC A and E *sub* 878) whilst in hiding himself, which led to the victory at Edington, which in turn gave him the respite from attack to introduce some of his more novel policies, including the burghal system. It may well be that the main late Anglo-Saxon hidation of Wessex had also taken place by this time, with the higher levels of service specified by the Burghal Hidage representing a temporary increase in the hidage assessment, reflecting the short-term needs of the military crisis (Brooks 1996: 133–42; Brooks 2003: 160–62). This would provide an additional explanation for the swift disappearance of some of the smaller burhs as soon as the military necessity had passed (see further below).

The dating of both the shiring and hidation of Mercia is less certain, and both can probably be linked with the expansion of West Saxon authority in the tenth century, although it is unclear whether this took place gradually, keeping pace with Edward's and Æthelstan's conquests, or as a single assessment after control of Mercia was fully established by Æthelstan (for more detailed discussion, see Hinton 1996; Hill 2001), but it certainly seems to have taken place by the reign of Edgar and took place within the same broad period as the expansion of the burghal system (see below), and very probably also the same period as the development of the hundreds and wapentakes. The expansion of all these units of assessment reflects both the expansion of royal authority and the determination to increase royal resources. The expansion of a system of courts at different levels, combined with the increasing regulation and control of trade, leads to another important non-military function of the burh, which was as a means for kings to increase royal revenues. The legal system did not simply maintain law and order but generated revenue through fines. Although the precise mechanism for the administration of the late Anglo-Saxon coinage is uncertain, it seems fairly clear that moneyers held their positions in farm to the king, and that both king and moneyers derived profit from a system based around legal regulation of the coinage. While the picture of tolls and other profits from trade in burhs is most clearly and fully established in Domesday Book (Sawyer 1978: 195, 201), it is clear that these concepts were already clearly linked with *burghal* status by the time of the Worcester charter from the reign of Alfred mentioned above. As noted above, the burhs were strategically placed to control roads and rivers. Control of the transport network also meant control of trade, and this military function was thus coupled with the potential to use burhs to increase revenue through tolls and so forth (see below), and the same point is also true of bridges. The 'excuse' of military necessity thus ena-

bled rulers to demand services of burh-work and bridge-work from the civilian population which would then enable those rulers to increase the revenues derived from that population in the future.

The Worcester charter also makes it clear that the profits associated with burghal status could be shared with major landowners, thereby giving them a vested interest in making the system work, even if in some cases the extension of royal rights in the burhs may have led to the appropriation of rights and revenues which the landowners themselves had previously enjoyed. Thus in Worcester, the bishop is granted a share of the revenues associated with the burh, although those revenues may previously have been enjoyed by the bishop alone (Brooks 1996: 143; Fleming 2010: 246–47).

That brings in the last factor associated with the burhs, which is their role as ecclesiastical centres. Again, any detailed discussion of this falls beyond the scope of this essay, but John Blair has argued both that Anglo-Saxon minsters in the pre-Viking period in many ways prefigure later burhs both as centres of power and as proto-urban centres of production and exchange; and that minsters continued to play a role, if somewhat secularized, within the new urban communities of late Anglo-Saxon society, with the distinction between a fortified minster settlement being very difficult to distinguish from a secular burh (Blair 2005: 246–90, 330–41). Some burhs indeed grew out of minster sites, while others, like Worcester, were existing episcopal centres (Fleming 2010: 246–47). While the dense distribution of burhs, especially in southern England, meant that there was never an episcopal see for every burh, the development of smaller bishoprics under Alfred has some parallels with the devolution of secular authority through the burghal system, while the gradual evolution of parishes in the tenth and eleventh centuries (Blair 2005: 368–505), although even less clearly documented or understood than the development of the burhs, to some extent shows the evolution of ecclesiastical structures growing up to balance the secular structures of hundred, burhs, and shires. Although this does not relate so directly to the royal authority reflected in most aspects of the burh, the idea of Church, king, and state working as an integrated whole fits very much into Alfred's integrated view of society, as briefly discussed above. Furthermore, although this linking of the sacred and the secular is particularly apparent under Alfred, with his payments to the Church, and his fighting men, praying men and working men all contributing to society, a similar approach underpins much of the thinking of his successors. This is particularly apparent in Chapters 26–27 of the Wantage code of Æthelred II (Liebermann 1903: v Æthelred 26–27). The key functions of military service (burhs, bridges, *fyrd*, and fleet), improvement of the peace, and improvement of the coinage are all

linked together with the sense that obedience to the king's law is also obedience to God's law, and that obedience to God's law is the only way to ensure His favour to the nation:

> 26 But God's law henceforth is to be eagerly loved by word and deed; then God will at once become gracious to this nation

> 26.1 And people are to be zealous about the improvement of the peace, and about the improvement of the coinage everywhere in the country, and about the repair of boroughs [and about the repair of bridges] in every province and also about military service, according to what is decreed, whenever it is necessary,

> 27 and about the supplying of ships, as zealously as possible, so that each may be equipped immediately after Easter every year.

Influences and Parallels

Although the burghal system developed by Alfred and his successors appears to represent a major development within Anglo-Saxon England, it did not develop from nothing, nor is it unparalleled elsewhere. The most obvious parallel, and a likely inspiration, is the Frankish *civitas*. Under both the Merovingians and the Carolingians, the *civitas* remained a focus for authority and administration, both secular and ecclesiastical. While the defensive role of the *civitas* was not always effectively exploited, with city walls being mined for dressed stone to build churches even during periods of Viking raiding (Halsall 2003: 217), well defended cities did play an important role in limiting Viking conquests. The *civitas* also provided a focus for royal and, often, episcopal administration, while the Frankish coinage in most types mentioned the name of the *civitas* or *vicus* in which the coins were issued (Grierson and Blackburn 1986: 117–20, 208–17, 228–35). Like Æthelstan's national coinage, the inscriptions often mention the status as well as the name of the mint. In considering the possible influence of the *civitas*, one must note the willingness of Alfred and his successors to follow Frankish examples in other areas. Fortified bridges, which together with the burhs seem to have formed an essential component of Alfred's successful defence of Wessex, had a clear precedent in the bridge-building of Charles the Bald, and there may even be Carolingian influence behind the introduction of fortress work in Wessex, while there are certainly Carolingian parallels for the control of justice, markets, and the coinage (Hill 2003: 224–25; Nelson 2003, passim). The development of a national coinage under Alfred's dynasty was also almost

certainly imitating the Carolingian model. As a national system of fortified administrative centres, the Frankish example provides the most likely model.

This does not mean that there were no examples closer to hand. As noted above, the obligation to undertake fortress work dates back at least to the late eighth century in England, and London in particular seems to have functioned to some extent as a burh prior to Alfred's assumption of authority there at the end of the 870s. London is described as both *burh* and *wic* in Old English, and both *civitas* and *vicus* in Latin. This has been explained in part by the distinction between the City of London, within the old Roman walls, and the trading settlement west of the city at Aldwych and along the Strand (Hobley 1988; Cowie 2001). However, it probably also reflects distinctions of function rather than a purely geographical distinction. Documentary evidence does not support the suggestion that the Roman walls provided a consistent distinction between *burh* and *wic*, while the use of both *civitas* and *vicus* on coin inscriptions probably also reflects different roles — celebration of control of an important centre of Mercian royal authority by Ecgberht of Wessex (*civitas*) and competition with Dorestad in international trade by Coenwulf (*vicus*) (Williams 2008c: 43–46; Williams and Cowell 2009). As noted above, London is by no means unique in being referred to in different ways.

London is also not unique as a pre-Alfredian Mercian burh. Mercian charters begin to record work on fortifications as a standard military obligation tied to landholding from the mid-eighth century, along with bridge-work and service in the *fyrd*. These obligations were also imposed by Mercian over-kings in Kent and apparently spread to Wessex in the ninth century, although, as Nicholas Brooks has pointed out (Brooks 1971), the pattern of which obligations appear when and where may be distorted both by the chance of which charters happen to survive and by differences in diplomatic conventions between different scriptoria (see also Abels this volume). These charter references do not specify the nature of the fortifications, which might equally plausibly reflect Alfredian-style fortified towns, or smaller fortified estate centres such as Cynewulf's burh at *Meretun*. Traces of urban fortifications have been excavated at the Mercian towns of Hereford, Winchcombe, Worcester, and Tamworth, but precise dating of all of these is problematic. In each case there is a phase of fortification that can plausibly (if not conclusively) be linked with the documented programme of burh-building by Alfred's son-in-law Æthelred and daughter Æthelflæd in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. At Hereford, Winchcombe, and Tamworth, these were preceded by earlier phases of construction, and it is likely that these phases date from the period

of Mercian supremacy in the mid-eighth to early ninth century in which the obligation of fortress work appears. It is also conceivable that some of these may be products of Burgred's attempts to defend Mercia against the Vikings in the 860s and 870s (Bassett 2007; Bassett 2008). A fortification is recorded at Nottingham in AD 867, although it is unclear whether this was constructed by the Mercians or the Vikings themselves (ASC A and E, *sub* 866 [867]; see also Abels this volume).

The combination of archaeological evidence and documented obligations of fortress work has led to the suggestion that there could have been a Mercian network of burhs which prefigured that of Alfred, dating back as early as the reign of Offa (Haslam 1987; Bassett 2007; Bassett 2008). While this is not impossible, the evidence at present does not support the contention that a comparable burghal system necessarily existed across the whole of Mercia. The concentration of archaeologically attested fortifications in western Mercia, close to the Welsh border (a known area of conflict in the period, as witnessed *inter alia* by the construction of Offa's Dyke), may indicate a response to a localized threat rather than a larger system, and one may question what threat would have necessitated fortification in the more central areas of the 'greater Mercia' of Offa or Coenwulf. As noted above, the burh of Alfred and his children is best interpreted as a strategic response to the unprecedented strategy of the *micel here*. Clearly discoveries of comparable fortifications in eastern Mercia would strengthen the case for a Mercian system considerably, but this evidence does not yet exist (see also Abels this volume). Furthermore, most of the recorded burhs in eastern Mercia in the early tenth century are mentioned in terms which imply new constructions, either by Alfred's children or by Viking forces.

Even if one does accept that fortified towns were the norm in pre-Alfredian Mercia, there is nothing to suggest that these functioned in the same ways as Alfredian burhs. The dense network of the Burghal Hidage is not apparent in Mercia, even in the building programme of Edward and Æthelflæd, so while Mercian burhs might provide examples of the concept of fortified towns, they can hardly have inspired the burghal system. There is also no evidence that burhs had the same sort of non-military functions that developed under Alfred and his descendants. We lack a surviving Mercian law code, but Alfred's code was apparently developed with awareness of the earlier laws of Mercia and Kent as well as Wessex, yet it is not until the laws of Æthelstan that we see the burhs develop their more central roles in the regulation of trade and the exercise of law. Current orthodoxy suggests that within the Mercian kingdom itself, Mercian coinage was only struck in London, although Mercian issues were also struck in

East Anglia and Kent (Chick 1997). This is based on assumptions rather than hard fact, and it is not inherently unlikely that Offa or Coenwulf might have chosen to imitate the Frankish practice of dispersed minting, given the clear evidence of Frankish influence in other aspects of their coinage. However, it is notable that coin finds from western Mercia are exceedingly rare, making it difficult to argue that they were produced in the one area where there is evidence for pre-Alfredian burhs.

One may similarly argue that individual fortifications, including some of those listed in the Burghal Hidage, may have been built or refurbished by Alfred's predecessors rather than Alfred himself. Wessex had faced a severe Viking threat for a generation before Alfred came to the throne, and Alfred's predecessors were largely successful in defending the kingdom. The presence of military obligations in charters of this period points to formalized military organization, and it is clear that some of the military measures often attributed to Alfred had earlier precedents, such as the apparent use of a fleet to counter the Vikings at sea in AD 850. Fortress work is not documented before the mid-ninth century but as noted above, this could reflect scribal practice rather than the absence of the obligation, and it seems likely that there was at least some refortification from the reign of Æthelwulf (for more detailed discussion, see Abels this volume). Again, however, there is no evidence to suggest an integrated burghal system before Alfred's reign, or even in the early part of that reign, and there is an equal lack of evidence to suggest non-military functions associated with burghal status in pre-Alfredian Wessex.

One other fortified development is also of interest, although again it certainly does not prefigure the full burghal system. In AD 808, the Danish king Godfred forcibly relocated Slavic merchants from Reric to Hedeby, and a fortified town was established there under direct royal control. At the same time, Godfred also commanded that work should be undertaken on the large linear earthwork known as the Danevirke, although excavations indicate that this can only have been a partial refurbishment of an existing structure, and Godfred's murder shortly afterwards may mean that little work actually took place (Andersen 1998; Williams 2002: 293–94). However, Hedeby did develop into a fortified town, and minting was also introduced there shortly afterwards and also at Ribe in western Jutland (Malmer 2007; Hilberg 2011). The beginnings of urbanization in Denmark are unlikely to have had a direct influence on Alfred but almost certainly reflect Frankish influence. They serve as a reminder of the Frankish influence in northern Europe generally and reinforce the possibility of a Frankish inspiration for Alfred's burghal system.

A last potential influence suggested by David Hill (Hill 2003: 226–28) is that of Rome. Alfred's youthful visits would have introduced him to the massive city walls of Rome, and while Alfred would have had some experience of Roman walls in Wessex itself, and probably also from a number of Frankish cities on his way to Italy, the scale of construction at Rome could very plausibly have made a lasting impression. How far he would have associated them explicitly with defence is more of an open question, however, and it is rather less likely that they would have inspired his thoughts on burhs as centres of administration and authority. As with Hedeby, a single fortified settlement also fails to provide a convincing precedent for the burghal network.

Possible parallels to the burhs can be found slightly later, in the ring-forts of the Netherlands, in Ottonian Germany and, more debatably, in Denmark. Henry the Fowler also had arrangements for the garrisoning of towns by 'agrarian soldiers', although it is unclear whether these were inspired by the Anglo-Saxon system or a parallel development (Wormald 1980: 153). Klavs Randsborg (Randsborg 1980: 75–80) has noted that the towns of eleventh-century Denmark share some of the characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon burh, typically functioning as mints and centres of both royal and ecclesiastical administration in addition to their more urban functions. This is likely to be a direct result of Anglo-Saxon influence during the reign of Cnut. A similar point could be made concerning Sigtuna in Sweden, where the development of the royal planned town in the 990s coincided with the introduction of a regal coinage directly imitating that of Æthelred II (Malmer 1989; Malmer 1995). Slightly earlier, the programme of construction in Denmark in the early 980s also shows some similarities to the burghal system. The distribution of ring-fortresses of standardized design around Denmark points to construction on a massive scale, and like the burhs they provided potential centres both for defence and extended royal authority. If these are seen as planned settlements rather than purely as fortifications, the presence at Trelleborg of the skeletons of women and children becomes less problematic, and current thinking suggests that the minting of the anonymous 'Cross' coinage of late tenth-century Denmark is more likely to have been distributed between the ring-fortresses and Hedeby than entirely focused on Hedeby as previously thought (Moesgaard 2009; Hilberg 2011). Coupled with the redevelopment of Hedeby and the construction of the massive bridge at Ravning Enge, there is a clear sense of a national programme of construction, however short-lived (Williams 2002: 294), and the current research project around the royal complex at Jelling will undoubtedly stimulate further discussion about the precise nature of this programme.

Development of the Burghal System from Alfred to Æthelred

The burghal system that appears in the Burghal Hidage was designed to meet the needs of a relatively small kingdom. It remains a matter of debate how much of it derives from Alfred's time (as indicated by the various references to his burh-building) and how much from Edward's (as widely interpreted as the date of the surving text, from the inclusion of 'Mercian' burhs, such as Oxford, Worcester, Warwick, and Buckingham). That is too large a subject to discuss fully here, and I will merely note that the coinage minted in Alfred's name at Gloucester, Oxford, and London clearly indicates Alfred's royal authority in southern Mercia, while the Worcester charter mentioned above clearly indicates that the burh was constructed 'with the permission of' Alfred. This view of a single kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons, with the separate identities of Wessex, Mercia, and Kent submerged, is consistent with various aspects of Alfred's kingship. As Simon Keynes (Keynes 2001) has noted, there is no evidence that this situation fundamentally changed under Edward the Elder, and, although it is clear that some independence of action remained for the Mercian ealdorman Æthelred and his (West Saxon) wife, the extent to which they had independence of royal policy has perhaps sometimes been exaggerated.

Be that as it may, the tight grouping of burhs provided for both an integrated system of defence and strong royal authority across a finite area of southern England, and one in which royal authority was already strong. The combination of different types of burh, including small fortifications as well as refortified Roman towns and new urban foundations, probably indicates that the development of the burhs was primarily driven by military necessity, but Alfred's reign was characterized by joined-up kingship, so there is no need to assume a separation of military and civil functions.

The situation was somewhat different with the extension of the system in the later part of Edward's reign, and under Æthelstan. Here the burhs were used in part to defend the shifting borders against Viking attack but also as a means firstly of conquering areas formerly under Viking control and secondly of maintaining authority in those newly conquered areas. Those areas had been under Viking control for the best part of two generations and prior to that had no tradition of accepting West Saxon rule. The new burhs thus provided defensive refuges in potentially hostile territory, visible reminders of the changed political situation, and centres for the extension of royal authority. Thus they fulfilled many of the same functions as the castles of the Norman Conquest. During the period of conquest they could also be used to control local resources as in Wessex, and the building of fortifications in border areas by both sides suggests

that both Edward and the Viking leaders sought strategic control of territory rather than victory in battle, in contrast to the situation prior to Alfred's victory at Edington. With the exception of a few major battles such as Tettenhall and Brunanburh, the emphasis seems to have been on securing submission without battle where possible. Those that are recorded were generally battles for control of burhs, as at Bedford, rather than battles in the open field, reflecting the increasingly dominant role of the burh in Anglo-Saxon warfare.

The extended system was much less densely distributed than the burhs of the Burghal Hidage. In part this reflects where towns already existed. As noted above, a number of burhs were certainly already established in pre-Alfredian western Mercia, and it is clear both from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and to a lesser extent from archaeological evidence that the Vikings made use of a number of fortified settlements in the east Midlands, including important centres such as Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Stamford, and Northampton, as well as smaller towns. Numismatic evidence suggests that, as in the Burghal Hidage, these included some smaller fortifications that did not develop into major towns and which probably never had burghal status after the Anglo-Saxon conquest (Williams forthcoming). Nevertheless, the fact that Edward and Æthelflæd were willing to develop new burhs as well as making use of existing towns indicates that the distribution of burhs north of the Thames was not simply conditioned by the existing urban landscape. However, two other factors probably did influence the distribution.

The first was strategic. The dense network in Wessex reflected not only the control of resources and defence of the population within the boundaries of the kingdom but also the vulnerability of Wessex to attack by water. The success of the *micel here* was based around the use of fast-moving forces on land, supported by slower forces travelling by ship along major rivers. Wessex not only had extended coastlines, including natural harbours, but was bordered to the north by the Thames and the Severn, which were equally vulnerable to attack by shallow Viking ships. At the same time, these rivers provided natural barriers against land-based attack, and the burhs controlled crossing points as well as access along the rivers. As noted above, a line of burhs defended the Thames, while several of those further south were on or close to the coast, including several at the mouths of major rivers. As Alfred's successors extended their authority northwards, the kingdom came to include increasingly large landlocked areas. With the Thames already secured, we can see a line of burhs defending the Severn (and also providing defence against incursions from Wales), thus closing off the other potential route into southern Mercia.

Figure 6.3. The extended
burghal system in relation
to navigable rivers.
Map by G. Williams.

In the same way, the
burhs of the later years
of Edward's reign not
only secured a north-
ward expansion but also
blocked access along a
number of rivers run-
ning inland from the
Wash (see Figure 6.3).
A particular feature of
the period are the dou-
ble boroughs built by
Edward on both sides of
a river, and perhaps with
some sort of blockage
on the river in between.
Matt Edgeworth (per-
sonal communication)
has noted the presence of a weir across the river at Bedford, aligned with the
Saxon defences, and has postulated that this may originally have been part of
the same defensive structure, in addition to its value for powering mills. Other
burhs controlled the major waterway of the Trent, while a concentration of
burhs was established in the north-west, surrounding Chester, which emerged
from a 'deserted Roman fortress' in AD 893 into a major centre of Anglo-Saxon
authority by the end of Edward's reign (Ward 2001; Griffiths 2009). The burhs
around Chester, including Manchester, Runcorn, Thelwall, Eddisbury, and
(probably) Rhuddlan, may in part have been intended to defend against attacks
from North Wales and from the Scandinavian settlements in the Wirral, and
beyond the Mersey (Griffiths 2001; Griffiths 2009: 13), but between them
they also controlled access into Mercia from the Irish Sea, controlling between
them the Dee, the Mersey, the Clwyd, and the network of Roman roads radiat-
ing from Chester. With burhs controlling the major access points south of the
Humber/Mersey, there was arguably less need for strategic defence in depth
across the whole of the area in between the extended frontiers. This approach

did not mean that incursions could be prevented altogether, but those which culminated in the battles of Tettenhall and Brunanburh were apparently met efficiently before the Viking forces had the opportunity to penetrate far, while the attacks of Olaf Guthfrithsson and Olaf Sihtricsson in the reign of Edmund centred on control of the burhs of the east Midlands. The burhs which were established inland provided further control of the road and river system, but their less dense distribution reflected the needs of government and administration as much as defence.

This emphasis on controlling coasts and rivers is reinforced by the development of Anglo-Saxon sea power in the tenth century. Exactly when this development began is unclear. Æthelstan was able to muster forces by land and sea to attack Scotland in AD 934, and by the reign of Edgar, some form of ship-levy is evidenced by the appearance of ship-sokes which, like hides, hundreds, and shires, seem to have had a primary role in the assessment of military service. These ship-sokes were apparently groupings of three hundreds, which were between them responsible for providing one ship (John 1980: 172–73; Abels 1988: 93; Abels in this volume; Pullen-Appleby 2005: 45–54). Richard Abels (Abels 1997; Abels in this volume) has suggested that reliance on defensive fleets effectively replaced the role of the burh in Anglo-Saxon military organization in the course of the tenth century; but, while we certainly see no indication of the tightly grouped network of burhs seen in the Burghal Hidage beyond the reign of Edward, I am more inclined to see a combination of mobile fleets and static burhs providing an integrated defence in coastal areas, which remained effective at least up to the death of Edgar who, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, '[improved] the security of his people more than all the kings who were before him within the memory of man' to the extent that 'no fleet however proud, no host however strong, was able to win booty for itself while that noble king occupied the throne' (ASC E, *sub* 959; A *sub* 975). Even beyond this, the principle of an integrated approach survived. Æthelred's code of 1008 groups together repair of burhs (and in some versions also bridges) with military service and the provisioning of ships (Liebermann 1903: v Æthelred 26.1–28.1). The limited success of Æthelred in resisting the Vikings may say more about his inability to exercise authority over the ealdormen on whom the delivery of those military obligations depended than about the effectiveness of the obligations themselves.

A second factor which may have influenced the more modest development of burhs beyond Wessex is the cost of building, maintaining, and garrisoning them. As widely noted, the burden of the garrison specified by the Burghal Hidage is far higher than any other obligation of military service in Anglo-
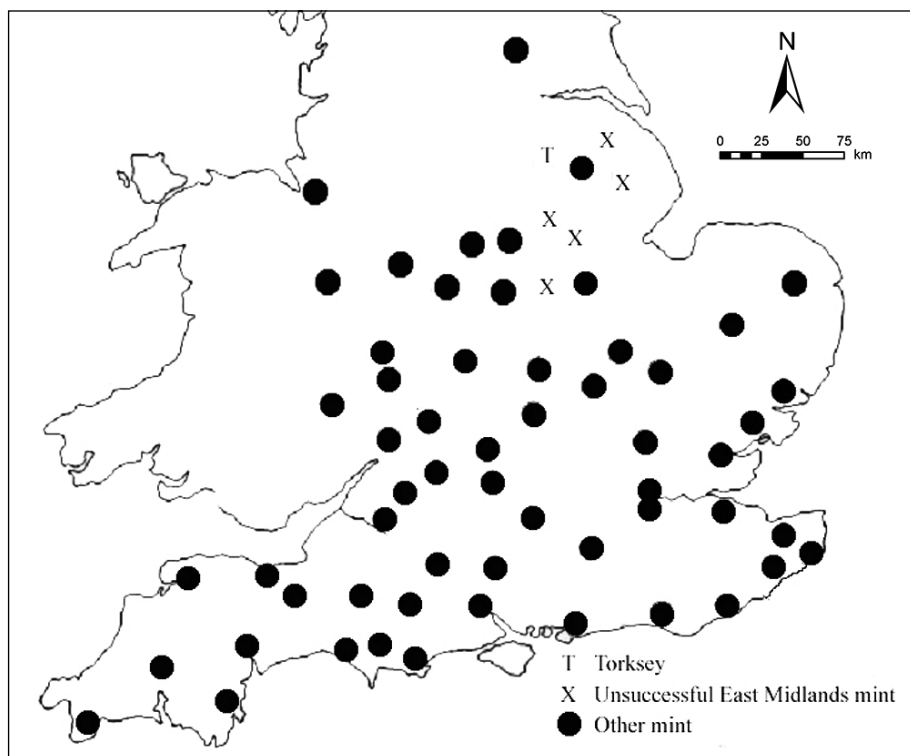
Figure 6.4. The extension of mints/burhs in the east Midlands in the late tenth century.
Map by G. Williams.

Saxon England, either before or after. In general, references to 'bridge-work' and 'fortress work' in charters are not very specific and are therefore difficult to quantify, but clearly the more fortresses and fortified bridges there were to be maintained, the more onerous the burden. It was one thing to impose heavy burdens on an existing kingdom at a time of recognized threat. I have argued elsewhere that the core requirements for the development of systematic national or regional defence were a combination of strong central authority, a shared sense of identity, sufficient administrative capacity, plus an external threat as stimulus (Williams 2001; Williams 2002). All of these were present in Alfred's Wessex, and even then he had difficulty in enforcing the necessary work on the burhs. As the kingdom expanded, those conditions were less apparent. Despite the new emphasis on a combined 'Anglo-Saxon' and subsequently 'English' identity by Alfred's dynasty, it does not seem that this was embraced by all. The extent to which Æthelred and Æthelflæd were genuinely independent

rather than effectively viceroys of Alfred and Edward may be debated (Keynes 2001), but the fact that there was at least a degree of autonomy even in western Mercia until the death of Æthelflæd in AD 918 points to the limitations of both shared identity and royal authority. This was probably as much or even more of a problem in other areas. It is interesting that when Æthelstan established his 'national' coinage as *Rex totius Britanniae*, the coins of Derby and other mints in the Mercian heartland call him *Rex Saxorum*, emphasizing his foreignness, while the type does not seem to have been struck at Lincoln or some other eastern Mercian mints at all (Blunt 1974: 93–97; Lyon 2001: 71) (Figure 6.4).

Against this background, attempting to enforce the same level of service in newly conquered areas as in beleaguered Wessex would have been difficult if not impossible. The problem would have been exacerbated by the poor quality of the land across large parts of the Midlands. In comparison with the bulk of Wessex and southern Mercia, the combination of fen, moorland, and forest across large tracts of the newly conquered territories meant that these could never have sustained such a heavy hidage assessment as more productive areas, with necessary implications for the level of military service that they could support. A similar point may explain the relative paucity of burhs in the extreme south-west (for an alternative explanation of this, see Brooks 1996: 136–41). As the imminent Viking threat receded it was probably increasingly difficult to maintain such a high level of service in Wessex as well, which may explain the apparently prompt disappearance of some of the smaller burhs of the Burghal Hidage as soon as the immediate military necessity was past.

A somewhat looser network of burhs was thus established in the Midlands. The greater distances between them, and perhaps also resistance to the imposition of new forms of government, may have led to the repeal during Æthelstan's reign of some of the legal controls on trade. Again, a legal system based on the dense network of burhs in the south was not necessarily well suited to a much larger kingdom, and a willingness to consider regional differences flexibly is visible in Edgar's laws with the insistence on 'in every burh and in every shire the rights belonging to my royal dignity, as my father had', in established Anglo-Saxon territory, but at the same time permitting 'that secular rights be in force among the Danes according to as good laws as they can best decide on' (Liebermann 1903: IV Edgar 2a, 2.1).

What we do see in Edgar's reign through to the early years of Æthelred is an attempt to establish a wider network of burhs in the east Midlands. As noted above, there is no evidence for extensive urbanization in eastern Mercia in the pre-Viking period, and while the established interpretation of 'The Five Boroughs' is more problematic than is generally recognized (Williams forth-

coming), the area certainly appears to have been dominated under Viking rule by the large settlements of Lincoln, Stamford, Nottingham, Derby, and Leicester, although perhaps with some smaller fortified towns also active in the period. Within this region, even with the addition of Bakewell in AD 920, Anglo-Saxon burhs were more widely spaced than further south, with Lincoln and, to a lesser extent, Stamford being particularly isolated.

Specific references to burghal status are rare, but given the links between burhs and minting already mentioned, it is striking that the area saw the introduction of a series of new but very minor mints. A small group of coins, previously attributed to Peterborough, can now be attributed to Melton Mowbray (Blackburn 2000), bridging the gap between Leicester and Stamford, while Newark filled the gap between Nottingham and Lincoln as well as provided a further control on the Trent. Within what was to become Lincolnshire itself, mints were apparently established at Grantham, Horncastle, Louth, Caistor, and Torksey, providing the sort of density of burhs across the county typically found in more southerly areas. There is no evidence to suggest that the majority of these had any active military role, although the names of both Caistor and Horncastle recall Roman fortifications, and the defences of the Viking fortified camp of the 870s may still have been extant a century later at Torksey, while both Torksey and Newark helped control the important route of the Trent. Nevertheless, given the comparative peace of Edgar's reign through to the early years of Æthelred, it seems likely that the main focus of these new burhs was on the non-military functions of the burh: principally the improved regulation of trade and the extension of royal authority. This was represented in part by the introduction of a new national coinage, both more successful and more long-lasting than its predecessor under Æthelstan. However, the new burhs in Lincolnshire appear to have been a failed experiment, producing a handful of coins between them, whereas Lincoln emerged as one of the dominant mints of the newly united kingdom. It would seem that a local tradition of Lincoln's dominance predominated, despite the best efforts of Edgar and his successors, pointing to the fragility of royal authority in remoter regions of the unified kingdom. North of the Humber, there does not seem to have been even an attempt to alter York's status as the solitary mint and burh, nor was Edgar able to introduce the hundred system (Sawyer 1978: 201) or to divide Northumbria into smaller shires. This again probably reflects the persistence of existing practice, and certainly reflects the limited extent of royal authority north of the Humber until the harrying of the North by William I, and the subsequent establishment of additional power centres at Durham, Carlisle, and Newcastle.

With hindsight, it is both easy and misleading to see the unification process, and the extension of royal authority with it, as a single smooth progression. This is not the case. Æthelstan's assimilation of Sihtric's former kingdom met with more resistance than the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* finds appropriate to mention (Williams and Ager 2010), and, although his success at Brunanburh in AD 937 reasserted his dominance in the north, it was not until the death of Eric Bloodaxe in AD 954 that the West Saxon dynasty had firm control of the north (for contrasting readings of the power struggle in the latter part of this period, see Downham 2003; Downham 2004; Downham 2007: 107–20, and Williams 2010: 79–120). Even then, the division of the kingdom in AD 957 between Eadwig and Edgar shows the continued fragility of the new unity, and was only ended by Eadwig's untimely death, while the divisions in the eleventh century between Cnut and Edmund Ironside and Harold I and Harthacnut show that unification was certainly not perceived as inevitable even then. If a unified kingdom was so weakly established, it seems likely that royal authority was rather more firmly established in some areas than others. Burhs formed a key element in the extension of that royal authority, and while they can certainly be observed as a feature of an expanded Anglo-Saxon royal authority, the extent to which a single burghal system can be observed in practice across the whole of England (like other aspects of the maximalist interpretation of the late Anglo-Saxon state) may be exaggerated.

Conclusions

Civil defence was one aspect of the late Anglo-Saxon burh, but it was generally a comparatively small element, especially after the initial phase of burh-building under Alfred and his children. During this phase, burhs in their role as fortifications were undoubtedly used to defend Anglo-Saxon territories, both within the established West Saxon overkingdom south of the Thames, and in the newly conquered/assimilated territories to the north. The unprecedented scale of military service required to build, maintain, and garrison the burhs, together with the speed with which some of the smaller burhs apparently disappeared, points to a primary military function in the initial phase. However, Alfred believed in joined-up government, with a coherent link between different elements of society and between different aspects of kingship and royal authority. Many of his ideas were concerned with extending the authority of the king through increasing organization and regulation of the kingdom, and it seems likely that both he and Edward quite deliberately exploited the mili-

tary crisis as an opportunity to introduce lasting extensions of royal authority, which might have been more difficult to impose in times of peace and without the physical focus provided by the new burghal foundations. This tradition was continued and developed under successors, and a large part of the structure of the late Anglo-Saxon state was probably fully formed under Edgar, coinciding with the establishment of a greater degree of political unification across the newly formed 'Kingdom of the English' than earlier kings of Alfred's dynasty had enjoyed. Within this emerging kingdom, burhs acted as centres for the public expression of royal authority. Even defence was strongly linked to the extension of royal authority, and from the mid-tenth century onwards, burhs may have acted more as highly visible symbols of the capacity of the king to defend his people than as an effective defence in their own right. The development of a tight network of burhs played a key role in Alfred's ability to defend Wessex effectively in the latter part of his reign, and a looser form of the burghal structure was instrumental both in the conquest of the kingdoms north of the Thames and in the expansion and maintenance of royal authority within the emerging kingdom of England. However, the failure to impose the burghal system effectively in northern England was both a limiting factor on, and a consequence of, the expansion of royal authority in that area, and it contributed both to the difficulties of defending England against renewed Viking attacks in the late tenth and eleventh centuries and to the wider limitations of royal authority in the north throughout the late Anglo-Saxon period.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Keynes, Simon, and Michael Lapidge (ed. and trans.). 1983. *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth)
Liebermann, Felix (ed.). 1903. *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols (Halle)
Swanton, Michael (ed. and trans.). 1996. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London)
Whitelock, Dorothy (ed.). 1979. *English Historical Documents, c. 500–1042*, 2nd edn (London)

Secondary Studies

Abels, Richard P. 1988. *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley)
——, 1997. 'English Logistics and Military Organisation, 871–1066: The Impact of the Viking Wars', in *Maritime Warfare in Northern Europe: Technology, Organisation, Logistics and Administration, 500 BC–1500 AD*, ed. by Anne Nørgård Jørgensen and others, Publications from the National Museum, Studies in Archaeology and History, 6 (København), pp. 257–65
——, 2003. 'Alfred the Great, the *micel hæðen here* and the Viking Threat', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 265–80
Andersen, H. Helmuth. 1998. *Danevirke og Kovirke: arkæologiske undersøgelser 1861–1993* (Århus)
Archibald, Marion M. 1991. 'Coins', in *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture, AD 600–900*, ed. by Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse (London), pp. 284–89
Archibald, Marion M. and Christopher E. Blunt. 1986. *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles 34: British Museum, Anglo-Saxon Coins, v. Athelstan to the Reform of Edgar, 924–c. 973* (London)
Bassett, Steven. 2007. 'Divide and Rule? The Military Infrastructure of Eighth- and Ninth-Century Mercia', *Early Medieval Europe*, 15, 53–85
——, 2008. 'The Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon Defences of Western Mercian Towns', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 15, 180–239
Blackburn, Mark A. S. 1996. 'Mints, Burhs and the Grately Code, cap. 14.2', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 160–75
——, 1998. 'The London Mint in the Reign of Alfred', in *Kings, Currency and Alliances: History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century*, ed. by Mark A. S. Blackburn and David N. Dumville (Woodbridge), pp. 105–25
——, 2000. '*Metheltun* not *Medeshamstede*: An Anglo-Saxon Mint at Melton Mowbray rather than Peterborough Abbey', *British Numismatic Journal*, 70, 143–45
——, 2003. 'Alfred's Coinage Reforms in Context', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 199–218

——, 2008. 'Presidential Address 2005: Currency under the Vikings, Part 2: The Two Scandinavian Kingdoms of the Danelaw, *c.* 895–954', *British Numismatic Journal*, 78, 204–26

Blackburn, Mark A. S., and Simon Keynes. 1998. 'A Corpus of the *Cross and Lozenge* and Related Coinages of Alfred, Ceolwulf II and Archbishop Æthelred', in *Kings, Currency and Alliances: History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century*, ed. by Mark A. S. Blackburn and David N. Dumville (Woodbridge), pp. 125–51

Blair, John. 2005. *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford)

Blunt, Christopher E. 1974. 'The Coinage of Athelstan, King of England, 924–939', *British Numismatic Journal*, 42, 35–158

Brink, Stefan, and Neil Price (eds). 2008. *The Viking World* (London)

Brooks, Nicholas P. 1971. 'The Development of Military Obligations in Eighth- and Ninth-Century England', in *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge), pp. 69–84

——, 1979. 'England in the Ninth Century: The Crucible of Defeat', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 29, 1–20

——, 1996. 'The Administrative Background to the Burghal Hidage', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 128–50

——, 2003. 'Alfredian Government: The West Saxon Inheritance', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 153–74

Campbell, James (ed.). 1980. *The Anglo-Saxons* (Harmondsworth)

Chick, Derek. 1997. 'Towards a Chronology for Offa's Coinage: An Interim Study', *The Yorkshire Numismatist*, 3, 47–64

Cowie, Robert. 2001. 'Mercian London', in *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe*, ed. by Michelle P. Brown and Carol Ann Farr (Leicester), pp. 194–209

Draper, Simon. 2008. 'The Significance of Old English *burh* in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 15, 240–53

Downham, Clare. 2003. 'The Chronology of the Last Scandinavian Kings of York', *Northern History*, 40, 23–51

——, 2004. 'Eric Bloodaxe — Axed? The Mystery of the Last Viking King of York', *Medieval Scandinavia*, 14, 51–77

——, 2007. *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014* (Edinburgh)

Fleming, Robin. 2010. *Britain after Rome: The Fall and Rise, 400 to 1070* (London)

Godman, Peter, and Roger Collins (eds). 1990. *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–40)* (Oxford)

Graham-Campbell, James A., and Gareth Williams (eds). 2007. *Silver Economy in the Viking Age*, Publications of the Institute of Archaeology University College London (Walnut Creek)

Grierson, Philip, and Mark Blackburn. 1986. *Medieval European Coinage I. The Early Middle Ages (5th–10th centuries)* (Cambridge)

Griffiths, David. 2001. 'The North-West Frontier', in *Edward the Elder, 899–924*, ed. by Nicholas J. Higham and David H. Hill (London), pp. 167–87

——, 2009. 'The Archaeological Background', in *Vikings in the North-West*, ed. by James A. Graham-Campbell and Robert A. Philpott (Liverpool), pp. 13–23

Hadley, Dawn M., and Letty ten Harkel (eds). Forthcoming. *Everyday Life in Viking Towns: Social Approaches to Viking Age Towns in Ireland and England, c. 850–1100* (Oxford)

Halsall, Guy (ed.). 1998a. *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West* (Woodbridge)

——, 1998b. 'Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West: An Introductory Survey', in *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*, ed. by Guy Halsall (Woodbridge), pp. 1–46

——, 2003. *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450–900* (London)

Haslam, Jeremy. 1987. 'Market and Fortress in England in the Time of Offa', *World Archaeology*, 19, 76–93

Hilberg, Volker. 2011. 'Silver Economies of the 9th and 10th centuries AD in Hedeby', in *Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society in Scandinavia, 800–1100*, ed. by James A. Graham-Campbell, Soren M. Sindbæk, and Gareth Williams (Aarhus), pp. 203–25

Hill, David H. (ed.). 1978. *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 59 (Oxford)

——, 2001. 'The Shiring of Mercia — Again', in *Edward the Elder, 899–924*, ed. by Nicholas J. Higham and David H. Hill (London), pp. 144–59

——, 2003. 'The Origin of Alfred's Urban Policies', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 219–34

Hill, David H., and Margaret Worthington (eds). 2005. *Æthelbald, Offa and Beonna*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 283 (Oxford)

Hinton, David A. 1990. *Archaeology, Economy and Society: England from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Century* (London)

——, 1996. 'The Fortifications and their Shires', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 151–59

Hobley, Brian. 1988. 'Saxon London: *Lundenwic* and *Lundenburh*: Two Cities Rediscovered', in *The Rebirth of Towns in the West, AD 700–1050*, ed. by Richard Hodges and Brian Hobley, Council for British Archaeology, Research Report, 68 (London), pp. 69–82

Hodges, Richard, and Brian Hobley (eds). 1988. *The Rebirth of Towns in the West, AD 700–1050*, Council for British Archaeology, Research Report, 68 (London)

John, Eric. 1980. 'The Age of Edgar', in *The Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by James Campbell (Harmondsworth), pp. 160–91

Jonsson, Kenneth. 1987. *The New Era: The Reformation of the Late Anglo-Saxon Coinage*, Commentationes de nummis saeculorum IX–XI in Suecia repertis, n.s., 1 (Stockholm)

Keynes, Simon D. 1998. 'King Alfred and the Mercians', in *Kings, Currency and Alliances: History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century*, ed. by Mark A. S. Blackburn and David N. Dumville (Woodbridge), pp. 1–45

——, 2001. 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', in *Edward the Elder, 899–924*, ed. by Nicholas J. Higham and David H. Hill (London), pp. 40–66

——, 2003. 'The Power of the Written Word: Alfredian England 871–99', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 175–98

Lyon, C. Stewart S. 2001. 'The Coinage of Edward the Elder', in *Edward the Elder, 899–924*, ed. by Nicholas J. Higham and David H. Hill (London), pp. 67–78

Malmer, Brita. 1989. *The Sigtuna Coinage, c. 995–1005*, Commentationes de nummis saeculorum IX–XI in Suecia repertis, n.s., 4 (Stockholm)

——, 1995. 'Från Olof till Anund: Ur sigtunamyntingens historia', in *Myntingen i Sverige, 995–1995*, ed. by Kenneth Jonsson, U. Nordlind, and I Wiséhn (Stockholm), pp. 9–26

——, 2007. 'South Scandinavian Coinage in the Ninth Century', in *Silver Economy in the Viking Age*, ed. by James A. Graham-Campbell and Gareth Williams, Publications of the Institute of Archaeology, University College London (Walnut Creek), pp. 13–27

Metcalf, D. Michael. 1978. 'The Ranking of the Boroughs: Numismatic Evidence from the Reign of Æthelred II', in *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*, ed. by David H. Hill, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 59 (Oxford), pp. 159–212

——, 1998. *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon and Norman Coin Finds, 973–1086* (London)

Moesgaard, Jens C. 2009. 'Harald Blåtands "Jellingemønter" cirka 975–985', *Nordisk numismatisk unions medlemsblad*, 43–46

Nelson, Janet L. 2003. 'Alfred's Carolingian Contemporaries', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 293–310

Nørgård Jørgensen, Anne, and Birthe Clausen (eds). 1997. *Military Aspects of Scandinavian Society in a European Perspective, AD 1–1300* (København)

Pullen-Appleby, John. 2005. *English Sea-Power, c. 871–1100* (Hockwold-cum-Wilton)

Randsborg, Klavs. 1980. *The Viking Age in Denmark: The Formation of a State* (London)

Reuter, Timothy. 1985. 'Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 35, 75–94

——, 1990. 'The End of Carolingian Military Expansion', in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–40)*, ed. by Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford), pp. 391–405

Reynolds, Andrew, and Leslie Webster (eds). 2012. *Early Medieval Art and Archaeology in the Northern World* (Leiden)

Sawyer, Peter. 1968. *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks, 8 (London)

——, 1978. *From Roman Britain to Norman England* (New York)

Screen, Elina. 2007. 'Anglo-Saxon Law and Numismatics: A Reassessment in the Light of Patrick Wormald's *The Making of English Law*', *British Numismamtic Journal*, 77, 150–72

Tyler, Damian J. 2005. 'Orchestrated Violence and the "Supremacy of the Mercian Kings"', in *Æthelbald, Offa and Beonna*, ed. by David H. Hill and Margaret Worthington, British Archaeological Reports, British ser., 283 (Oxford), pp. 27–34

Ward, Simon. 2001. 'Edward the Elder and the Re-establishment of Chester', in *Edward the Elder, 899–924*, ed. by Nicholas J. Higham and David H. Hill (London), pp. 160–66

Williams, Gareth. 2001. 'Military Institutions and Royal Power', in *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe*, ed. by Michelle P. Brown and Carol Ann Farr (Leicester), pp. 295–309.

——, 2002. 'Ship Levies in the Viking Age: The Methodology of Studying Military Institutions in a Semi-Historical Society', in *Maritime Warfare in Northern Europe: Technology, Organisation, Logistics and Administration, 500 BC–1500 AD*, ed. by Anne Nørgård Jørgensen and others, Publications of the National Musuem, Studies in Archaeology and History, 6 (København), pp. 293–308

——, 2005. 'Military Obligations and Mercian Supremacy in the Eighth Century', in *Æthelbald, Offa and Beonna*, ed. by David H. Hill and Margaret Worthington, British Archaeological Reports, British ser., 283 (Oxford), pp. 101–10

——, 2008a. 'RORIVA CASTR: A New Danelaw Mint of the 920s', *Scripta varia numismatico Tuukka Talvio sexagenario dedicate: Suomen numismaattisen yhdistyksen julkaisuja*, 6, 41–47

——, 2008b. 'The Coins from the Vale of York Viking Hoard: Preliminary Report', *British Numismatic Journal*, 78, 227–34

——, 2008c. *Early Anglo-Saxon Coins* (Oxford)

——, 2008d. 'Raiding and Warfare', in *The Viking World*, ed. by Stefan Brink and Neil Price (London), pp. 93–103

——, 2009. 'Hoards from the Northern Danelaw from Cuerdale to the Vale of York', in *Vikings in the North-West*, ed. by James A.Graham-Campbell and Robert A. Philpott (Liverpool), pp. 73–83

——, 2010. *Eirik Bloodaxe* (Kernevik)

——, 2011a. 'Coinage and Monetary Circulation in the Northern Danelaw in the 920s in the Light of the Vale of York Hoard', in *Studies in Early Medieval Coinage II: New Perspectives*, ed. by Tony Abramson (Woodbridge), pp. 148–160

——, 2011b. 'Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society in the Viking Age: Reflections in the Light of Recent Research', in *Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society in Scandinavia, 800–1100*, ed. by James A. Graham-Campbell, Soren M. Sindbæk, and Gareth Williams (Aarhus), pp. 337–72

——, 2013. 'The Northern Hoards Revisited: Hoards and Silver Economy in the Northern Danelaw in the Early Tenth Century', in *Early Medieval Art and Archaeology in the Northern World: Studies in Honour of James Graham-Campbell*, ed. by Andrew Reynolds and Leslie Webster (Leiden), pp. 459–86

——, Forthcoming. 'Towns and Identities in Viking England', in *Everyday Life in Viking Towns: Social Approaches to Viking Age Towns in Ireland and England, c. 850–1100*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley and Letty ten Harkel (Oxford), pp. 14–34

Williams, Gareth, and Barry Ager. 2010. *The Vale of York Hoard* (London)

Williams, Gareth, and Michael R. Cowell. 2009. 'Analysis of a Gold Mancus of Coenwulf of Mercia (AD 796–821) and Other Comparable Material in the BM collection', *British Museum Technical Research Bulletin*, 3, 31–36

Wormald, Patrick. 1980. 'The Ninth Century', in *The Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by James Campbell (Harmondsworth), pp. 132–59

——, 1999. *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, I: Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford)

Aspects of Suburban Settlement at Early Urban Centres in England

Andrew Agate*

The study of urban development during the late Anglo-Saxon period has traditionally centred upon the role of the fortified sites we recognize as 'burhs'. A particular focus of interest has been the defensive circuits and internal layouts of these sites, apparent in the numerous plans published since the early 1970s (e.g. Biddle and Hill 1971; Hill and Rumble 1996; Hill 2000). This approach has been profitable, allowing such sites to be examined as elemental units of a wider defensive network. Such an approach, however, emphasizes containment and casts these sites as 'islands of royal power through which the king and his agents, earldormen, bishops, and reeves, were able to dominate the countryside' (Abels 1988: 80). Categorized in this way they appear isolated and differentiated from the surrounding rural landscape, not only topographically but also in terms of the social identity of their populations. How these differences were manifested and at what point in time they occurred remain key questions; F. W. Maitland (Maitland 1898: vi) suggested over a century ago that explaining 'the transition from rural to urban habits' was a task for the 'coming urban historian'. Although Maitland's perspective was grounded in legalistic corporate identity, similar questions have been asked more recently with reference to community identity in towns: 'when and how did early medieval settlements gain a distinctive urban identity? And was it derived from the character of the settlement itself and/or through its relationship to its rural surroundings?' (Astill 2006: 233).

* The following abbreviation will be used throughout this essay: S (charter numbers from Sawyer 1968).

Andrew Agate is a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

Suburban settlements, meanwhile, lie at the periphery of both urban and rural settlement studies, both physically and conceptually, which perhaps explains why they have received so little attention from archaeologists and historians. Slater's (Slater 2005: 28) assessment of medieval suburbs as an 'intermediate settlement category' emphasizes the point. Suburban community identity is rarely questioned due to a static and stereotypical suburban characterization; they are routinely described through an amalgam of negative connotations, which include political, economic, and moral subordination and degeneracy. Biddle, in his influential 1976 essay on Anglo-Saxon towns, touched upon the subject of suburbs and made the point that the necessary research questions concerning suburbs had yet to be formulated (Biddle 1976a: 140), an issue only now being remedied in the context of the present writer's doctoral thesis on the Anglo-Norman suburb. Previously, only one academic study has taken the medieval suburb in England as its central theme, Derek Keene's essay, 'Suburban Growth' (Keene 1976). This is a brief but valuable overview of the subject and the themes contained within remain relevant today, for example the value of suburbs as a measure of urban success.

While this essay is drawn from my wider research project examining suburban settlement at varying scales, the central theme of the present study is the significance of suburbs in relation to defensive circuits. In this respect two processes are explored below. Firstly, the encroachment of (sub)urban settlement over defensive circuits; and secondly, the enlargement of defensive circuits in order to include areas which were at one time suburban, or at least extramural. Both processes offer insights into the changing character of settlement at burhs and the purpose of examining them is twofold. Encroachment of settlement over defences suggests that they have become less significant or meaningful to both urban authorities and the urban population as a whole. The incorporation of suburbs into towns by means of extending defences, meanwhile, is suggestive of an increase in importance of the suburban area. Understanding these changes in the physical characteristics of towns, in terms of what is being enclosed and the chronology of these developments, are key indicators, it is argued, of the changing nature of settlement at burhs.

The extent to which burhs were conceived either as planned towns or as strongholds which, in some cases, developed urban characteristics over time is a topic of current debate and establishing a short or long chronology for urban development is a key task for researchers from numerous disciplines (Astill 2000: 35–36; Astill 2006: 235; Astill 2009: 263; Reynolds this volume). A long chronology might suggest that during the period from the decline of the

wic settlements until the appearance of fully urban places there was a period during which the late Anglo-Saxon state was non-urban.

The initial focus of this essay is a brief review of the stereotypical characterization of suburbs. This is followed by an examination of the question of suburban definition. Evidence for suburban settlement in Domesday Book is then examined. These considerations lead to a discussion of both the plan form and relative size of certain suburbs in relation to the Domesday boroughs. A revised model of suburban settlement is proposed suggesting that suburbs were key settlements in the transition from royal to seigneurial urban foundations, the latter of which predominate from the late twelfth century. Finally, using a range of evidence from selected sites, the development of suburbs and their subsequent enclosure is examined. Suburbs are a key indicator of the changing physical setting of burghal forts as they develop from strongholds to fully urban places, whether that chronology is short or long. Dating the establishment and subsequent enclosure of suburbs sheds new light on the development of *burghal* strongholds from islands of defence and power to fully urban centres.

Stereotyping Medieval Suburbs

> Where dwelle ye, if it to telle be?
> In the suburbes of a toun, quod he,
> Lurkynge in hernes and in lanes blynde,
> Wheras this robbours and thise theves by kynde
> Holden hir pryvee fereful residence,
> As they that dar nat shewen hir presence.
> (Ruggiers 1979: II, 103–08)

Writing in the late fourteenth century, Chaucer presents us with one of the earliest uses of the word 'suburb' in the English langue. Albeit brief, it is a remarkable contemporary description of the physical character of the later medieval suburb. Chaucer does not relate his suburb to a particular town but instead appears to have been using the concept to evoke an image of bleak, impenetrable places, the dens of thieves and robbers. It is a stereotypical image that has been remarkably tenacious. Over two centuries later Shakespeare presents an equally negative view of suburban inhabitants.

> there's a trim rabble let in: are all these
> your faithful friends o' th' suburbs?
> (McMullan 2000: v 4. 3343–44)

Both writers employ suburbs as a literary device and as a shorthand motif to describe society's less salubrious people and places. This generic image would no doubt have been familiar to their respective audiences, and, as such, these characterizations constitute the blueprint for how medieval suburbs have been perceived since, including colouring modern academic thinking.

In a recent study of medieval suburban hospitals, Carole Rawcliffe (Rawcliffe 2005: 251) suggests that from medieval suburbs 'emerges a Hogarthian world of pimps, prostitutes, heavy industry, gibbets, and butchers' waste not to mention the sick and homeless poor, desperate for institutional relief'. The proposition being that suburban hospitals were 'islands of charity' (islands being a recurrent metaphor in urban perceptions) arising from pre-existing 'troubled seas' (Rawcliffe 2005: 253). Indeed, the notion that suburbs have been perceived as such since their beginnings is an assumption underlying several recent essays which have had cause to characterize early suburban settlement. For example,

> The term was originally coined to describe a condition of sub-standardness, of physical and social isolation; in essence, a state of sub-urbanism. In contemporary times, the 'sub-urb' is still one of the most abused and maligned terms in the nomenclature of planning, architecture and urban studies. (Bourne 1996: 163)

Elsewhere it has been proposed that, 'negative assessments [of suburbs] probably go all the way back to the Latin origins of the term' (McManus and Ethington 2007: 320). The same authors also provide a succinct summary of the perceived essential elements that apparently combine to describe the stereotypical medieval suburb:

> Early suburbs were those parts of urban areas lying beyond the physical limits of the city, usually outside the city walls, where the unpleasant, polluting and dangerous trades were concentrated, along with the underclasses and outcasts who could not afford the privilege and safety of living within the city itself. (McManus and Ethington 2007: 320)

Understanding these elements is crucial: they represent a currently unchallenged descriptive and explanatory model for the earliest English suburbs, most of which grew up around burhs. Firstly, the classic stereotypical medieval suburb is a settlement physically and geographically separated from a town by a wall, ditch, or some other limiting feature. Secondly, they are home to trades and industries outcast from the urban core, judged too noxious or unhealthy to be allowed inside the town (Schofield 1999: 216; Schofield and Vince 1994: 66; Aston and Bond 2000: 108). Thirdly, and crucially, implicit in the term 'suburb' is the assumption that their inhabitants have a lower social and moral

status in relation to town dwellers, being below and beyond core urban 'civility'. Suburban dwellers are often characterized as the disenfranchised, who in general possessed 'few of those attributes commonly associated with civilized urban life and culture' (Bourne 1996: 163). Thus, the term 'suburb' is laden with the kind of negative socio-economic values which have largely escaped discourse relating to 'rural' or 'urban' settlements as considered under the traditional bipartite scheme of English medieval settlement classification (Giles and Dyer 2005: 2). In origin, suburbs are often viewed as 'overspill' settlements, suggesting 'congestion' in the core area (Biddle 1976a; Jones, Stocker, and Vince 2003: 231). Others suggest that suburbs simply 'grew' along existing approach roads, which then dictated their form (Keene 1976: 71; Schofield 2007: 125).

Viewed from a chronological perspective the current characterization of suburbs presents a problem. It is clear that suburbs developed at an early stage in the urban process in England. The numerous references to extramural settlement in Domesday Book are discussed below. These constitute the earliest written definition of suburbs in England, but crucially, archaeological evidence from towns such as Oxford (Oxfordshire), Lincoln (Lincolnshire) and Winchester (Hampshire) (Dodd 2003; Jones, Stocker, and Vince 2003; Biddle 1976b) indicates an even earlier genesis. Indeed, some English suburbs were in existence four centuries before Chaucer's description, and there is no a priori reason why later negative connotations defined their original character. In particular, there are a number of developments, particularly in the twelfth century, which had a dramatic impact upon how urban space was used and perceived in society. Twelfth-century developments include the introduction of suburban monasteries and hospitals, institutions that were magnets for the poorest and most needy in medieval society. The introduction of these institutions in the wake of the Norman Conquest may have fundamentally changed the nature of suburban settlement. There is no doubt that suburbs changed their character over time, reflecting broader social change, and this is most evident in the English suburbs created as a by-product of the massive urban growth driven by the Industrial Revolution. The classic view of the post Industrial Revolution suburb as a bourgeois enclave was created by Friedrich Engels (McManus and Ethington 2007: 320). Here, the traditional negative characterization was reversed. Engels's study of Manchester described the way in which the population lived around the city in concentric zones of housing which were segregated along class lines with the most wealthy living in 'remoter villas with gardens' and enjoying 'wholesome country air, in fine, comfortable homes' (Engels 1996: 59). Jim Dyos (Dyos 1982: 28) noted the way suburbs have become

romanticized, being a 'most favoured locality' with 'pixies on the lawn and John Betjeman at the garden gate'. Dyos contrasts this with the medieval suburb, which was home to all that was disreputable in urban society, 'a nether world of dungheaps, stinking trades, bloodsports, gallows, low taverns, prostitutes, foreigners, thieves, the poor and the mob' (Dyos 1982: 28).

Such a view of medieval suburbs reflects the ecological approach to urban social structures taken by those working in the Chicago School of urban sociology. The 'Chicago School', as it came to be known, describes a group of sociologists working at the University of Chicago in the first half of the twentieth century. Their methodology was 'heavily qualitative, rigorous in data analysis' (Lutters and Ackerman 1996: 2). This approach was in contrast to the established subjective 'arm-chair' methodologies practised by their contemporaries. At a time when American cities, such as Chicago, were experiencing large-scale growth, the Chicago School represented a paradigm shift in sociology. They viewed the city as a 'social laboratory' and actively examined parallels between natural and social systems. The ecological models they developed came to frame their examinations of urban social relations. This Darwinian approach uses a biological metaphor to theorize on human relationships within the urban framework. Herein the population inhabits an economically competitive urban landscape in which the most successful groups occupy the most favourable locations at the urban core. In terms of suburban expansion, the Chicago School perhaps finds its fullest voice in the work of Earnest Burgess who believed this economically competitive approach — the struggle for scarce resources — as inevitably producing a land-use pattern of concentric rings radiating out from a core business area (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1967). The ecological approach, however, has been criticized for viewing urban social interaction as a process of adaption to the urban environment while failing to consider the powerful influences of political and cultural structures, not to mention the role of class or race (Gottdiener and Budd 2005: 1–4).

Perceptions of English medieval suburbs appear jaundiced and fossilized; their potential as an aid to explaining urban development over time has been greatly overlooked by generations of scholars who have adhered to stereotypical and static models. Palliser (Palliser 1984), for example, has argued that at York the medieval settlement on the south-west bank of the River Ouse was an early urban nucleus 'far from being a mere suburb'. Before exploring suburbs further it is necessary to consider questions of definition.

Defining Suburbs

Suburbs are, unsurprisingly, defined in relation to towns. It is perhaps unfortunate that such an obvious observation raises the old question 'what is a town?'; an issue recently described as 'hackneyed and old fashioned' (Giles and Dyer 2005: 1). Insomuch as the question relates to the definition of suburban places, however, it demands consideration. We should be reminded that early urban historians were less troubled by the question, which was resolved upon legal or constitutional bases. It was Maitland's (Maitland 1898: 18) assertion that, 'the borough community is corporate: the village community is not'. More recently the idea that the term 'borough', with its particular legal or constitutional definition, can be projected backwards to define the towns of Domesday has been questioned (Reynolds 1977: 97; Reynolds 1987).

Perception plays a major role in urban/suburban definition, and Hill (Hill 1987: 47) has suggested that 'the real problem is that we know what a town is, but we have trouble expressing it'. In the modern world a recent government report suggested that when classifying an area as suburban a 'degree of judgement' is required (Todorovic and Wellington 2000: 19). Cross-cultural differences amplify differing perceptions and can be exemplified through the language used to express ideas of urban places. Schledermann (Schledermann 1970: 115) has identified the problems apparent in modern Europe, where different countries classify settlements with a varying hierarchy of terms.

Issues connected to language and perceptions are no less acute in the Saxo-Norman period. Study of Domesday Book, for example, involves a complex interaction between three languages: Latin, Old English, and modern English. Therein the word *burgus* is used widely, but loosely, prompting Susan Reynolds (Reynolds 1987: 296–98) to reflect upon the dynamic nature of towns and how, as they develop, the vocabulary available to express ideas about them may not keep pace.

Reynolds (Reynolds 1977: ix) also developed the most widely used definition of a town, part functional, part social, that a town is 'a permanent human settlement' where 'a significant proportion (but not necessarily a majority) of its population lives off trade, industry, administration, and other non-agricultural occupations'. Reynolds stresses that a variety of non-agricultural occupations should be in evidence. The social aspect is that the inhabitants should see themselves as a well-defined social unit 'more or less distinct from the surrounding countryside'. This social aspect brings us once more to the topic of 'difference' and how that may be perceived.

Moving to suburbs, definition is no less an issue and is equally vexing. A technical definition can be found in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), which states that a suburb comprises 'the country lying immediately outside a town or city; more particularly, those residential parts belonging to a town or city that lie immediately outside and adjacent to its walls or boundaries'. In this sense a suburb not only has a clear relationship with a town but also the 'wall or boundary' of the host urban settlement. Thus, according to the OED, it is the topographical location of suburban settlement that is key to it being defined as such, rather than any distinguishing characteristics it may possess.

The OED, however, gives two further senses: 'any of such residential parts, having a definite designation, boundary, or organization' and 'outlying parts, outskirts, confines, purlieus.' In these latter definitions a suburb becomes a more complex place. Instead of being purely relational to a wall or other urban boundary, such as a ditch or earthen bank, the suburb itself, in effect, constitutes the boundary. These definitions also suggest that suburbs have their own distinguishable internal organization, with a character independent of the host urban settlement. Palliser and others (Palliser, Slater, and Dennison 2000: 185) are in broad agreement believing that 'strictly speaking, only defended towns had suburbs, since the word implies an extra-mural location', adding that this is particularly the case in continental Europe. In England, however, they suggest that the term 'usually defines those areas of a town beyond the administrative limits of the town as well as those areas outside defences'. The key reason for this change in emphasis away from a strict relational definition to defences is that not all English towns possessed defences. Bond's (Bond 1987) study of urban defences suggests that 28 per cent of the 112 Domesday boroughs identified by Darby (Darby 1977: 297) had no defensive circuit.

Derek Keene (Keene 1976: 71) confined his definition to areas of settlement directly adjacent to walled towns concluding that 'this is not to say that areas of similar character did not occur towards the limits of towns which were not enclosed or where settlement did not extend beyond the walls'. This is an important statement. The possibility of intramural areas being differentiated with certain zones displaying suburban characteristics is at variance with existing definitions of suburbs. This scenario has been suggested for London, where the mid-ninth-century core, laid out after reoccupation of the former Roman walled area, left space for other activities within the walled area peripheral to the core settlement and which was gradually suburbanized over time (Museum of London 2000: 191; Milne 1990; Milne 2001: 120–22).

In addition to the town/suburb interface it is important to understand that suburbs are defined, unlike the urban core, by two edges; the first between

urban core and suburb, the second where the suburb articulates with its surrounding rural area. Keene (Keene 1976) reflects upon this second edge when he suggests that these boundaries represent the growing limits of the town. In this sense they may be considered as being at the cutting edge of dynamic urban expansion. Within modern urban studies a distinction has been drawn between established suburban settlement and the limit of suburban expansion, which lies on the rural-urban fringe (Kurtz and Eicher 1958). This distinction was refined by Conzen (Conzen 1960), who established the twin concepts of 'fringe belts' and 'fixation lines'. Conzen proposed that towns do not grow steadily but have periods of expansion and stasis. During the stable periods the leading edge of the (sub)urban area is defined by a discernable line, the fixation line. Fixation lines may follow, for example, town walls, plot boundaries, or a break of slope (Carter 1976: 16). The area of expansion closest to the fixation line, on the urban side, is the fringe belt. Successive fixation lines may be discernable in the townscape as there is often a change in the orientation of access routes and building plots between successive phases (Conzen 1960: 65). The urban fringe may give an impression of transition whilst the suburb is a more settled and established, almost urban landscape. These are important concepts both in defining suburban growth and in understanding the processes involved in physical change within towns.

This discussion of suburban definition in relation to the Anglo-Saxon town has revealed some of the complexities involved and demonstrates the need for an archaeological characterization. If suburbs are defined on the basis of being wholly extramural, the result is that suburbs hardly require definition on their own terms; the definition rests on the urban definition. Removing the necessity for a relational definition — specifically, removing limiting features, such as defences, from the definition — enables the conceptualization of suburbs as places with an internal character and dynamic. Via this route, suburbs may be construed as communities with identities, which may or may not be dependent upon relationships with the urban core or the rural interface. They may represent transitional space between the two, articulating rural and urban communities. This is particularly relevant to those Anglo-Saxon towns imposed upon an existing rural landscape, which could hardly have escaped precipitating a social response from surrounding communities.

Susan Reynolds's definition, as presented above, may well break down if applied to suburban settlement. There is currently insufficient research available to characterize the functional or social aspects of suburbs in the way that Reynolds successfully achieved with her urban definition. The existence of a wall, however, sharpens our ability to discern suburban settlement and in the

following section the focus is upon defended settlements; it is the relationship between suburb and defence which draws out an understanding of how meaningful the defences were to early urban communities. In addition, the evidence for suburban settlement in Domesday Book offers an opportunity to assess the relative size and importance of suburbs in relation to the range of settlements in the late eleventh-century urban hierarchy.

Perceptions and Plan Forms — The Domesday Evidence

Domesday Book and the Towns

Of those who have examined the Domesday evidence as a whole, Darby's *Domesday Geography of England* (Darby 1977) has been acknowledged as 'the most notable single achievement' (Sawyer 1985a: 3), and his synthesis remains a valuable source of information. With regard to towns, Darby warns of the problems encountered when assessing Domesday evidence, which is 'as unsystematic as it is incomplete' (Darby 1977: 289). The entries for boroughs lack the systematic approach accorded to manors, both in content and presentation. It appears that in planning the inquisition no provision was made as to the questions that should be asked of the boroughs (Martin 1985: 154). While the town entries are certainly problematic, Reynolds (Reynolds 1987: 309) has commented that they are more informative than many believe. She suggests historical geographers have a particular problem because the entries do not contain the sort of information that they are interested in. A more positive attitude towards this evidence may perhaps be taken, allowing it to be appreciated and approached in a manner akin to Dyer who sees a 'marvellous opportunity to explore the early history of towns' (Dyer 1985: 91).

The terminology used in Domesday Book also requires consideration. The survey is written in Latin, thus the Old English word *tūn* (meaning simply 'farm'), from which the word 'town' is derived, does not appear. As already noted, the Latin word *burgus* is employed to denote places that we would think of as towns (Reynolds 1977: 97). On occasions, however, *civitas* is used, particularly for Roman and cathedral towns; and finally the word *villa* is also used. The distinction between these three terms is not clear from the text and they appear largely interchangeable. The entry for Stafford (Staffordshire) contains all three terms, prompting Darby to suggest that the distinction is of no great importance (Darby 1977: 289). The emergence of the word 'town' to denote an urban settlement, however, may be of some significance. By the end of the twelfth century 'borough' denoted a legally defined settlement with particular

status. The divergence of the terms 'borough' and 'town' may reflect a shift in urban dynamics.

Study of Domesday Book here focuses primarily upon those entries that detail a borough in a single entry, the boroughs 'above the line' as Maitland (Maitland 1897: 186–87) described them. Each was examined for references to settlement outside of the core area (denoted by reference to either a wall or a ditch) and also for general references to defences in the text. The aim was to extract evidence for contemporary perceptions of extramural settlement and to assess the importance of defences in borough definition. The relevant part of the Domesday Book entry is listed below on a town-by-town basis. This is followed by a discussion of two themes arising from these brief references. The first relates to the size and plan form of the settlements, and a previously unrecognized plan form for suburban settlement is tentatively suggested. The second theme centres on oblique references to community relationships found in certain entries.

Domesday Boroughs with Suburban Elements

There is no entry for Winchester in Domesday Book, although there is a blank folio at the start of the Hampshire entries (Williams and Martin 2002: 89, fol. 37^r), presumably where Winchester was intended to be inserted. The situation is the same for London where space is left at the beginning of the entries for Middlesex. These blank folios suggest that the information was either never collected, arrived too late to be dealt with, or was just too complex to be summarized effectively (Finn 1973: 88). Winchester is referred to under entries for other manors in Hampshire. Thus Domesday records 'in Winchester 4 inhabitants of the suburbs (*suburbani*) pay 13s less 1d' (Williams and Martin 2002: 93, fol. 39^v). This appears to be the only reference to *suburbani* in Domesday Book — although Hertford and Torksey are both referred to as *suburbium*, interestingly the term is glossed as 'township' for Hertford and 'small town' for Torksey by Williams and Martin (Williams and Martin 2002: 368, fol. 132^r; 884, fol. 337^r). However, there are other references to people elsewhere living outside the walls.

In Kent, 'A certain monk of the church of Canterbury took 2 houses of 2 burgesses, one outside, the other within the city. These were situated on the Kings road' (Williams and Martin 2002: 5, fol. 2^r). On the same folio are mentioned other burgesses who 'had 45 messuages outside the city (*ext civitate*) for which they themselves had rent and customary dues' (Williams and Martin 2002: 5, fol. 2^r). While at Lincoln (Lincolnshire),

Kosveinn [...] outside the city (*ext civitate*) [...] has 36 houses and 2 churches to which nothing belongs, which he built on the wasteland that the king gave him, and that was never before built upon. Now the King has all the customs from them. (Williams and Martin 2002: 883, fol. 336ʳ)

In Northamptonshire,

In the time of King Edward there were in Northampton, in the King's demesne, 60 burgesses, having as many dwelling, of these 14 are now waste and: 47 are left. Besides these there are now, in the New Borough 40 burgesses in King William's demesne. (Williams and Martin 2002: 589, fol. 219ʳ)

New Boroughs are also mentioned in passing at Norwich and Nottingham and these are discussed below.

Domesday Towns and References to Defences

Domesday makes mention of defences at a number of towns. In Herefordshire it records that 'in the city of Hereford in the time of King Edward there were 103 men dwelling within and without the wall (*intus 7 extra murum*) and they had the following customs' (Williams and Martin 2002: 494, fol. 179ʳ), and for Oxford, that 'in this vill, within the wall as without (*ta intra muru qua extra*), there are 243 houses paying geld, and besides these there are 500 houses, less 22, so waste and destroyed that they cannot pay geld' (Williams and Martin 2002: 422, f 154).

In Leicester (Leicestershire) we hear that 'from a part of the land, outside the wall (*extra murum*) [the Bishop of Lincoln] has 5s4d, and 3 villains with a priest and 12 bordars have 4 ploughs' (Williams and Martin 2002: 629, fol. 230ᵛ), and of 5 houses in Colchester (Essex) belonging to Ranulf Peverel 'one of these is outside the walls (*extra muras*)' (Williams and Martin 2002: 1050, fol. 107ʳ). In York we are told of 1 'messuage' being 'in the ditch' and shortly afterwards of '4 other messuages in the ditch' (Williams and Martin 2002: 785–86, fol. 298ʳ), and finally at Nottingham (Nottinghamshire) 'in the borough ditch there are 17 houses and 6 other houses' (Williams and Martin 2002: 757, fol. 280ʳ).

These brief entries referring to suburbs and defences constitute a disparate data set of passing comments, and the resulting record is constructed by accident not design. There are two broad themes, however, that may be drawn from this contemporary record. The first is the comparative size of certain extramural settlements. Allied to this is the issue of suburban plan forms. Understanding the physical characteristics of these settlements may be instructive as to their

origins. The second theme concerns community relationships. This is less obvious in the Domesday references, but it is possible to make a brief comment upon community relationships between intra- and extramural townspeople.

Borough Size and the Plan Form of Extramural Settlement

The most striking feature of extramural settlements in Domesday Book is their comparative size. Those at Canterbury and Lincoln are particularly noteworthy. It is possible to make a cautious comparison of the size of these settlements using data compiled by Alan Dyer (Dyer 2000: 752–53). Dyer's ranking attempts to place the 112 Domesday boroughs identified by Darby (Darby 1977: 297) into an 'order of magnitude'. The metric employed for establishing the size of each borough is the number of 'properties', which Dyer identifies in Domesday Book through the Latin terms *mansurae*, *mansiones*, *hagae*, and *domus*, four Latin terms for properties that may or may not be synonymous (Ballard 1904: 13; Darby 1977: 294). Dyer (Dyer 2000: 752) acknowledges further caveats: the Domesday record is incomplete, and it was not collected or compiled with such analysis in mind. The list Dyer puts forward represents 'tentative orders of magnitude'.

It is not possible to establish how many buildings there were in individual settlements, as it is clear that a *messuage* (and equivalents) might contain more than one house, although it is probably safe to assume that each contained at least one household. Dyer's list comprises 104 Domesday boroughs where one or more properties are listed and of these, thirty-one (30 per cent of the total) have fewer than forty-five properties. This makes the extra mural settlement at Canterbury, for example, a significant size. At Lincoln the number of properties in the extramural settlement is thirty-six. There are twenty-six boroughs (25 per cent of the total) on Dyer's list with fewer properties than this. The suburban settlements at Canterbury and Lincoln appear to rank within the top 70 per cent of Domesday towns measured by number of properties.

The extramural settlement at Lincoln has been identified with the medieval suburb of *Butwerk*, which immediately abuts the *Werkdyke* ditch on the eastern side of the lower city (Jones, Stocker, and Vince 2003: 230–35). The likely meaning of the place-name Butwerk (OE *būtan (ge)weorc*) as 'outside the fortification' reinforces the point (Cameron 1985: 20). The layout of the settlement has been explored archaeologically and topographically and can be compared with existing knowledge of suburban plan forms. A plan of *Butwerk* is shown in Figure 7.1.

Plan Form

Keene addressed the issue of plan form in his 1976 essay suggesting that suburban form was dictated by aspects of the topography of the town, primarily principal approach roads and the position of town gates. Keene concluded that most suburbs comprise either one of two plan forms. The first is a long 'ribbon' development along major arterial roads leading to and from the town. The second is a more compact settlement clustering around the intersection
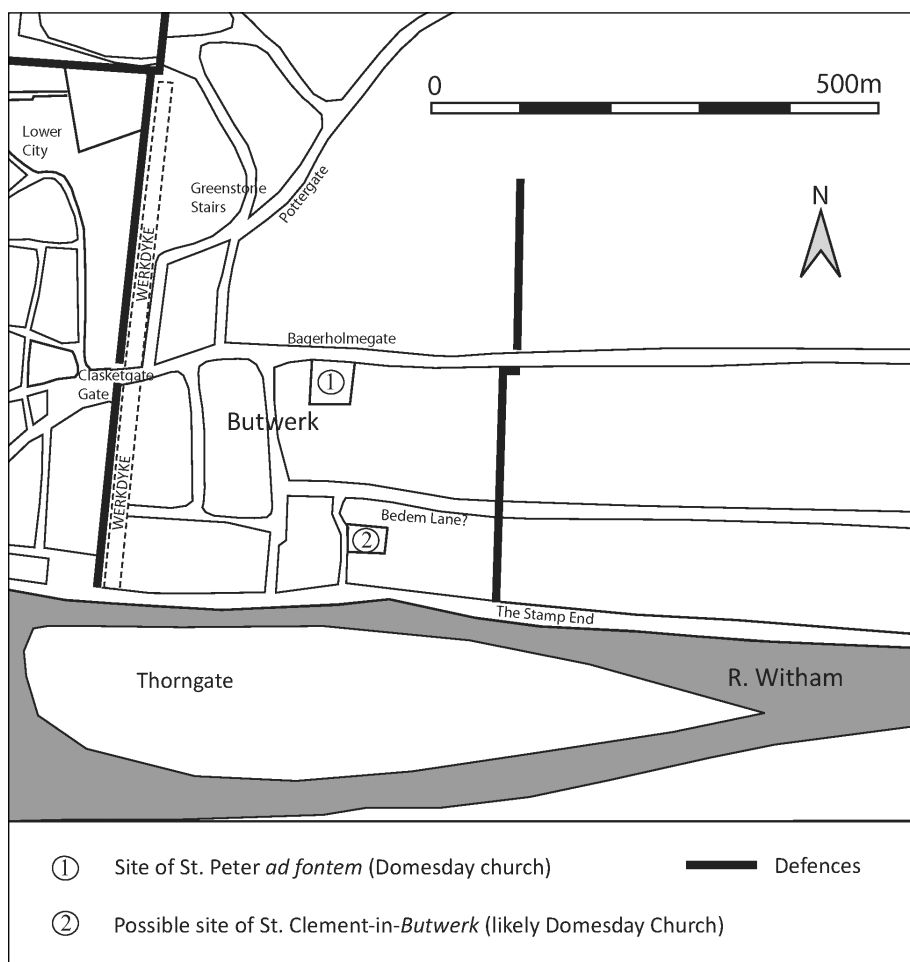
Figure 7.1. The planned suburb of Butwerk, Lincoln. Extramural occupation is archaeologically attested from the tenth century, while a planned suburb is recorded in Domesday Book. Redrawn from Jones, Stocker, and Vince 2003: 231.

of two or more roads at their meeting point outside the town. This latter form has been styled 'goose foot' (Palliser, Slater, and Dennison 2000: 185) after the pattern produced by the intersection of roads. A third form of suburban settlement along extramural roads which often encircle towns has been suggested by Hill (Hill 1987: 51), who notes that a feature of this type of suburb is its encroachment upon a town's defensive ditch. These three suburban plan forms are shown in Figure 7.2a. Domesday Book has clear evidence for this type of encroachment suburb: whether the town was expanding outwards or the suburb was expanding inwards appears to be a moot point. What seems apparent is that the defences at these places had lost their significance by the late eleventh century, and that the town was content to blur the physical separation between itself and its suburb.

Hill (Hill 1987: 51) suggests that earthworks surrounding a town marked the limit of the 'specifically urban legal provisions possessed by the town'. The idea, however, that the town ditch marked a legal boundary but could readily be infilled by encroaching settlement appears contradictory. There is no evidence to suggest that townspeople or royal administrators were, in 1086, thinking in terms of a legalized 'borough status' requiring physical demarcation (Reynolds 1977: 97). The existence of law codes restricting trade to intramural areas of towns has been used to support the idea that trade was the structuring principle behind the intramural layout of towns, particularly apparently planned street layouts (Hill 2000; Biddle and Hill 1971). In this model, as initially conceived, the town had both a defensive and a commercial function; Stenton's (Stenton 1971: 537) description of a town as possessing a wall, mint, and market is brought to mind. In support of this view, the existence of a market has been proposed as the only indispensible feature of a town if the 'criteria bundle' method of definition is used (Heighway 1972: 9). Domesday Book, however, records very little concerning markets in boroughs. Of the sixty markets mentioned only nineteen are in boroughs (Darby 1977: 318). Meanwhile the relationship between markets and hundredal organization has been established for some time (Britnell 1978), and Haslam (Haslam 1987) has suggested the existence of extramural markets at a number of places, although the evidence employed is morphological not archaeological and therefore problematic with regard to date. The proposition that a defensive boundary does not mark the edge of a settlement in a legal sense is also suggested by the fact that encroachment upon town ditches was allowed to take place. The crucial point is that the ditch was no longer regarded as a defensive feature; the need for defence, at the least that form of defence, appears to have passed.
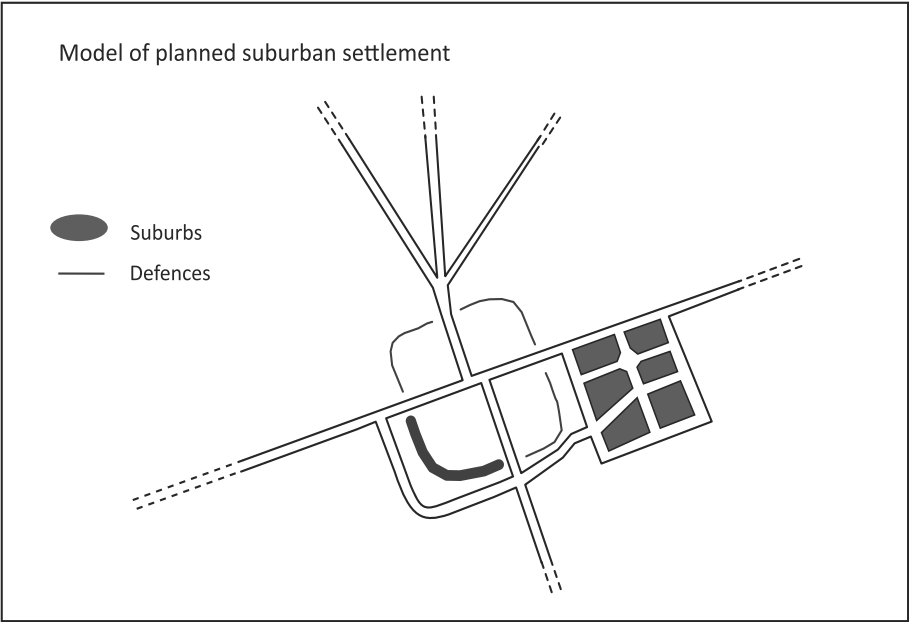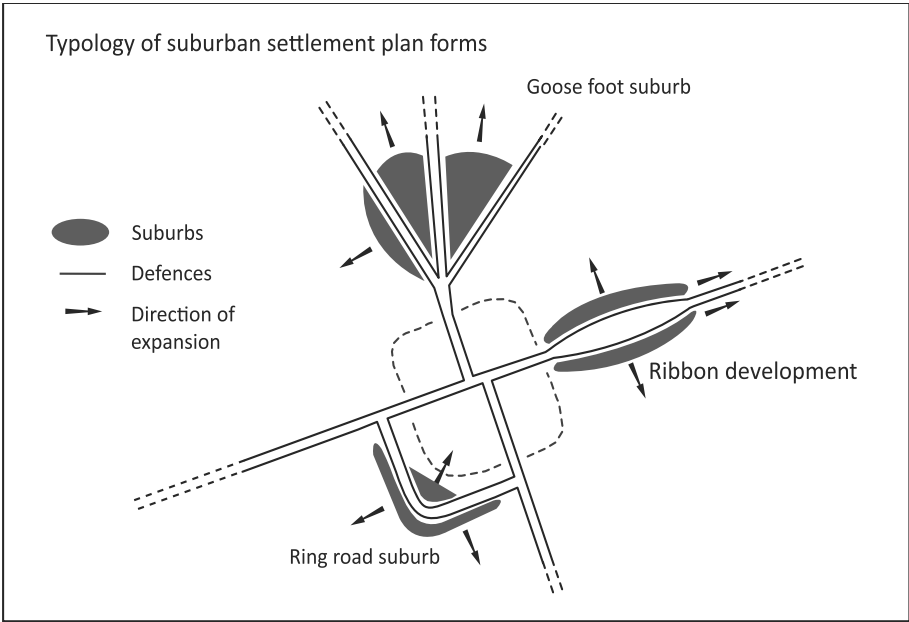
Figures 7.2. a) Typology of suburban settlements.
b) Simplified model of planned suburban settlement.
Drawn by A. Agate.

That the defences delineated scant social distinction between burgesses is also demonstrated in Domesday Book. At Hereford the customs in the time of King Edward the Confessor (Latin: *tempora regis Eduardis* or *TRE*) are listed, and it is noted that under William the burgesses retained their former customs. The point of interest is that the customs of those who live outside the wall are identical to those living within, with one exception: a messuage rendered 7½d within the walls but only 3½d outside (Williams and Martin 2002: 493, fol. 179ʳ). The Hereford entry is instructive in the sense that the compilers of Domesday Book clearly felt a need to distinguish between intra- and extramural messuages, although it appears that the distinction lies solely in the rent due for each type of land holding. While this distinction must have been meaningful in a way that is no longer discernable, it is interesting to note that those living outside the walls — at least at Hereford — were clearly regarded as part of the borough community.

Encroachment at York and Nottingham also suggests the ditch may have become redundant as a feature and that the space it occupied could be more profitably employed. Topographical and place-name evidence from Oxford, Worcester (Worcestershire), and Stamford (Lincolnshire), all of which have extramural 'Broad Streets' over their former defensive ditches, provide further instances of encroachment, and in these cases the intention was evidently to create space for markets. Wide extramural streets have been noted as a feature of extramural topography by Keene (Keene 1976: 73), who suggests these were 'marshalling grounds' for carts waiting to pay tolls prior to entering towns, or spaces for fairs and markets.

In addition to encroachment onto defensive ditches, which may indicate piecemeal expansion of settlement, there is also strong evidence for planned urban expansion and the existence of an additional suburban plan form not previously recognized in England (Figure 7.2b). The substantial extramural settlement at Lincoln shows signs of a planned rectilinear street layout reminiscent of the intramural layouts of the burhs first recognized in the 1970s (Jones, Stocker, and Vince 2003: 232; Biddle and Hill 1971). The fact that Domesday Book preserves the name of the person who owned the thirty-six houses and two churches that comprised the Lincoln settlement appears to bind the whole into a single coherent planned exercise. The notion of large scale planned suburbs is at variance with that of plan forms wholly dictated by existing topography, as outlined above. There is further evidence of such planned suburban settlement at Northampton, Nottingham, and Norwich (Williams and Martin 2002: 589, f 219; 757, f 280 and f 1058, f 118 respectively). At these places Domesday Book records settlement clearly outside of the established core settlement. The site of the New
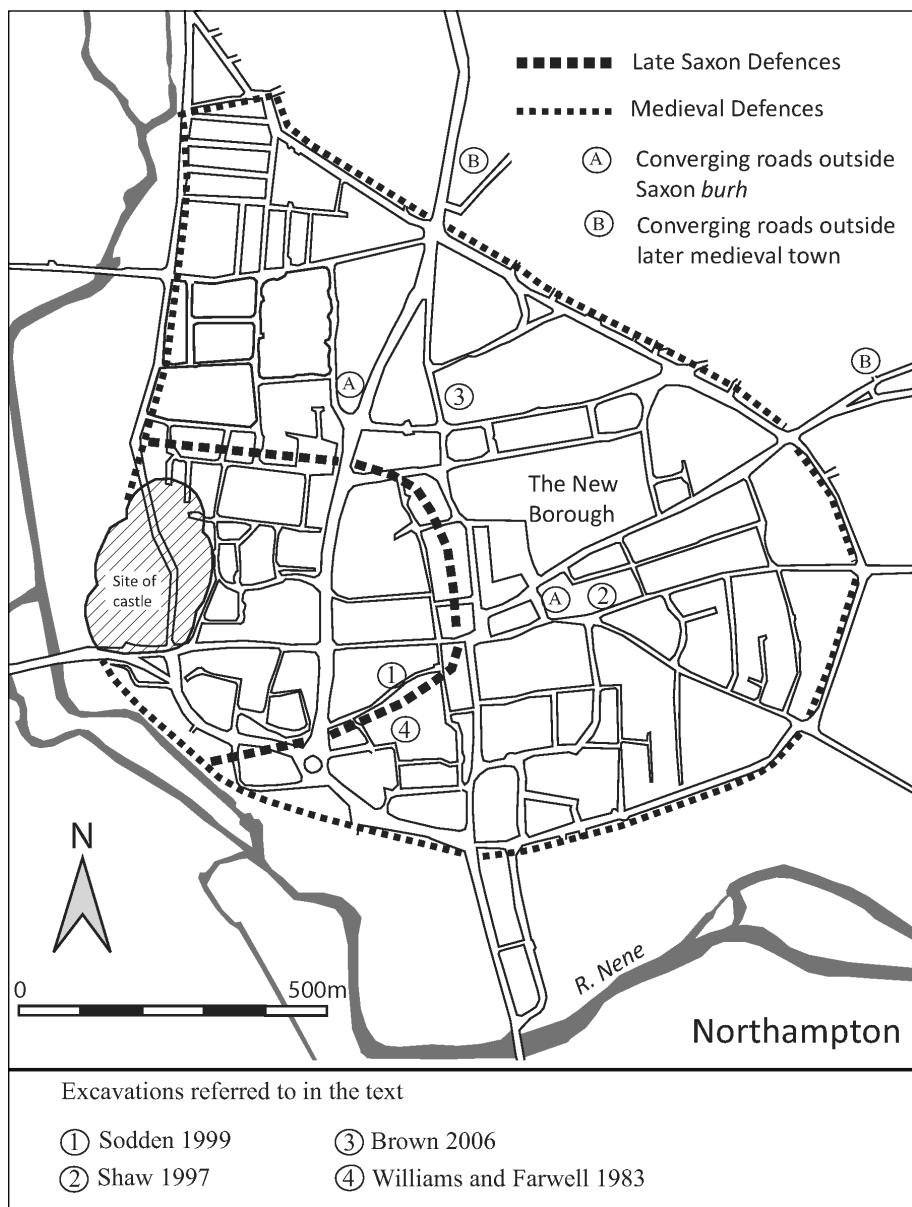
Figure 7.3. Saxon and later medieval Northampton showing the defences and sites
mentioned in the text. After Brown 2006 and Shaw 1997.

Borough at Northampton, for example, is directly without the late Saxon defences and appears to have a planned layout (Figure 7.3) (Foard 1995: 114).

While the aforementioned settlements are recorded as 'New Boroughs' it may be argued that their status at the time of Domesday Book is ambiguous. They are called boroughs but are recorded as a part of the existing town and not accorded a separate entry. At Nottingham, the rent from the New Borough is added to that of the old, while over time the New Borough became the urban core, leaving the Saxon site as peripheral (Keene 1976: 77). The New Borough at Norwich was a major settlement apparently with 134 *burgesses* and applying Dyer's ranking, is well within the top 50 per cent of settlements ranked by number of Domesday properties. Further research in the context of the present writer's doctoral thesis tentatively suggests that the New Boroughs together with the extramural settlements at Lincoln and Canterbury may represent an intermediate stage in the process which saw the privatization of urban foundations. It is clear that prior to the twelfth century borough foundation was overwhelmingly a royal prerogative (Beresford and Finberg 1973). By the end of the twelfth century seigneurial foundation was the norm. Private foundation of borough sized settlements attached to existing towns, on land granted by the king, may have led to the formulation of the practice wherein individuals were permitted to found full boroughs. This model fits with other processes of privatization and 'cellularization' and the extension of magnate power evident in Europe during this period (Blair 2005: 369).

The Incorporation of Suburbs

The documentary and topographical evidence discussed above suggests that by the late eleventh century a number of suburbs were significant settlements: comparatively large, well planned, and integral to urban communities with burgesses who enjoyed, in some cases, the same rights and customs as those who lived inside the town. The following section examines evidence for the development of suburbs and their subsequent enclosure and argues that their development and inclusion into adjacent urban areas are key indicators of the changing physical setting of burhs. Evidence from Hereford, Worcester, and Northampton will be considered.

Hereford

Reporting on excavations at Hereford, Shoesmith (Shoesmith 1982) postulated a six stages of development for the defences, which relate either to exten-

sions of the circuit or to refurbishment of existing defences. These stages encompass three phases of expansion; the establishment of an enclosure of perhaps 13 ha, an extension to the east which enlarged the enclosed area to *c*. 21 ha, and finally the late twelfth-century wall which enclosed *c*. 38 ha plus a further 7 ha south of the River Wye (Shoesmith 1982: 76–87; Bassett 2008: 182). As at many places, dating of the defences remains problematic, however, Bassett's (Bassett 2008) recent re-evaluation suggests that the first phase was constructed between the late eighth and mid-ninth centuries, the second phase during the late ninth to early tenth centuries, while the third phase was begun in the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries. The first phase is explained as a deliberate act of royal town planning to enclose the cathedral site and layout a regular street pattern (Shoesmith 1982: 91); an exercise which anticipates the later Wessex model of burh foundation (Biddle 1976c: 27). This enclosure left both the minster church of St Guthlac's and a postulated nearby royal hall in an extramural location (Whitehead 2007: 15–27). The second phase extended the defences to enclose St Guthlac's and the royal site, uniting the churches and the possible administrative centre during the late ninth to early tenth centuries.

The unification of royal and ecclesiastical functions is reinforced by a recent townscape characterization project which draws attention to apparent differences in the street plan elements in the parts of the town which are believed to have belonged to the king and the bishop (Baker 2010: 21). The characterization project has also drawn attention to two phases of suburban expansion to the north of the phase two enclosure. Firstly, around All Saints Church there is an eleventh-century pre-Conquest suburb. This appears to be a planned undertaking incorporating both a church of royal foundation and a marketplace. This may be the home to the burgesses recorded in Domesday Book as living outside the wall, discussed above. The second suburb, known as High Town, is post-Conquest and appears to be more of an ad hoc development with fewer characteristics of a planned layout. It also features a marketplace and the church of St Peter's, first recorded in 1085. Excavations have revealed that the town ditch, which ran to the south of High Town, was not infilled at a single point in time but appears to have slowly gone out of use, being used as a sewer into the twelfth century (Baker 2010: 18). Both suburbs are enclosed by the phase-three wall in the late twelfth century, which completes the defensive sequence at Hereford and also the urban sequence. While Hereford is clearly an urban place by the early tenth century (Shoesmith 1982: 93), the incorporation of the suburbs, particularly the marketplaces, completes the aggregation of functions that make up the urban landscape at Hereford.

Worcester

Worcester benefits from its unique documentary evidence, a charter (S 223), recording that Ealdorman Æthelred and Æthelflæd 'ordered the borough (*burh*) of Worcester to be built' at the end of the ninth century. It is interesting to note that this document records the rights both 'in the market or in the street, both within the fortification and outside' (Whitelock 1979: 540–41). Since this document was presumably drawn up before Worcester began to operate as an urban place it is evidence that occupation or activity outside the defences was expected from the outset. The inference is that there was experience from other places of such activity.

Once again the defensive sequence has been examined, although not on the scale of the work at Hereford. The original burh is thought to have enclosed an area of *c.* 16 ha with the church of All Saints acting as a gate church in association with an extramural marketplace (Baker and others 1992: 73). These post-Roman pre-Conquest defences are thought to represent those detailed in the ninth-century charter, but this is not proven archaeologically (Baker and others 1992: 72; Worcester City Council 2007: 50). These defences appear to have been systematically dismantled to allow for urban expansion by the mid- to late tenth century. Part of this expansion was the suburb of Sidbury, which could have been in existence by AD 963 when the church of St Peter the Great is recorded in a royal diploma there (S 1327). This charter describes a parcel of land which is 'to the south of the wall near St. Peter's Church'. Archaeological evidence, however, suggests that permanent residential settlement in Sidbury began around AD 900 (Carver 1980a: 175), at about the same time as the foundation of the burh. As Carver (Carver 1980a: 180) suggests, there is 'no reason to assume, in Worcester or elsewhere, that the burh wall in any way defined the limitations of the settlement'.

Excavations in Sidbury have also thrown light on the character of the suburb there (Carver 1980a). Three timber tenements were laid out at right angles to an existing street, while the finds assemblages from these tenements were interpreted by the excavator as demonstrating that occupation was initially domestic. The first evidence for industrial activity (bone working) occurs only in the twelfth century. Regularly planned domestic tenements do not conform to the stereotypical image of suburban occupation. A new suburb was laid out in the post-Conquest period to the north of the town around Foregate and the Tything and was subsequently bisected when the medieval defences were built in the early thirteenth century (Baker and others 1992: 73).

Worcester's defences appear to go out of use in the mid- to late tenth century as the need for urban expansion grew and the requirement for defences waned. In parallel with Hereford the defensive and urban sequence is redrawn in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century when the medieval defences are constructed (Baker 2010: 52).

Northampton

As at other towns, archaeological evidence at Northampton has accrued as a result of development control and as a consequence excavations are often small-scale (Figure 7.3). While the defences here are less well attested archaeologically than elsewhere, excavated evidence from the town allows for some assessment of the pre-Conquest suburban areas to be made and compared with the intramural area.

Northampton may have possessed Viking period defences, although the construction of a burh there is usually attributed to the period following its recapture by Edward the Elder in 917 (Foard 1995: 112; Palliser, Slater, and Dennison 2000: 173). Archaeologically the defences have only been located to the south-west of Northampton's bridge. While the defensive chronology begins in the tenth century, the resolution is not sufficiently clear to attribute the construction to Danish occupation or their Anglo-Saxon successors (Chapman 1995). The defences appear, however, to be fossilized in the street plan (Lee 1954). There is plentiful topographical evidence for roads converging at probable gates to the burh, and at these entry points there appear to be open spaces, possibly for markets. This is most strikingly apparent around All Saints Church which may be a pre-Conquest foundation (Williams 1982: 78).

Intramural occupation at Northampton was initially framed within a regular street plan. During the ninth century occupation appears slight, but during the tenth century there is evidence for some cellared buildings within the defences, which were cleared and redeveloped in the tenth and eleventh centuries and replaced by timber halls, at which point the intramural street plan was formalized (Sodden 1999). A new town wall, enclosing a much larger area, was built in the twelfth century and further suburbs developed outside it (Foard 1995).

Excavations on St Giles Street, in the area of All Saints Church and about 200 m east of the east gate of the presumed burh, revealed occupation from *c*. AD 1000 evidenced by pits and postholes (Shaw 1997). Dating evidence takes the form of a large pottery assemblage of St Neot's type ware (AD 850–1100), which was common throughout the town. The location is presumed to be that of an extramural market and shares similarities with the St Giles area of Oxford,

also thought to be a marketplace outside the north gate of the town (Keene 1976: 73). In this regard, it is interesting to note that the Alfredian core of London, as proposed by Milne (Milne 1990; Milne 2001: 120–22) is bounded to the north by the wide street of Cheapside, making this marketplace on the edge of the town, further the roads from Newgate and Aldersgate converge near to its north-west corner. By the twelfth century at St Giles Street in Northampton there was a substantial timber building and evidence for plot boundaries, probably reflecting the success of the suburb, which was subsequently developed as the New Borough and became the core of the later medieval town.

Excavations at Sheep Street (Brown 2006), to the north-east of the burh revealed a large twelfth-century pit, the earliest feature on the site, resembling a late Saxon cellar, although the constraints of the excavation area prevented excavation of the entire feature. Nearby twelfth-century pits contained domestic rather than industrial refuse and abutted the street frontage indicating that twelfth-century occupation was not intensive, even on one of the town's main streets.

Finally, excavations to the south of the town, at St James's Square, failed to reveal any structures (Williams and Farwell 1983). There was some evidence, however, of industrial activity with flax retting, bone working, and iron working represented. The pottery assemblage largely comprised St Neots type ware covering eight phases of the excavation sequence, the first seven of which, including the industrial activity, spanned the period 850 to 1100.

Overall, excavations on Northampton's extramural sites can be interpreted as representing a growing suburban settlement archaeologically little different, if at all, from the intramural areas. This suburban occupation begins at the start of the eleventh century. Occupation is largely domestic, not particularly crowded, and building types represent the established urban repertoire of the period, cellared buildings and timber halls; there is also evidence for planning of property boundaries. The lack of intensive industrial activity is reminiscent of the Worcester suburb of Sidbury discussed above. Necessarily brief, this examination of suburban archaeology begins to suggest that early suburbs look little different from the urban core.

Conclusions

English towns are often described in terms of their later medieval walls, while suburbs to which reference is most commonly made are those that develop outside those later circuits. It is apparent, however, that at many places there

is a phase of suburban occupation that relates to the earlier Saxon defences and which reflects the changing physical setting of those burhs. The result is a sequence of urbanization evidenced by an archaeological horizon of early suburban settlement. Such occupation lies outside the Saxon defences but inside the later medieval defences and is often considered as part of the historic core of the town. In consequence these settlements are rarely referred to as suburban; a situation which has important implications for both archaeological and topographical recognition of suburban settlement and which impacts upon our understanding of the urban sequence. Not all towns develop in the same way; however, evidence for the development and enclosure of suburbs and/or the development of suburbs that were never enclosed can be found at many towns. At Oxford, for example, there is evidence for a southern suburb along the Thames crossing as early as the tenth century, while the foundation of the primary defences there is dated to the first decades of the same century (Dodd 2003: 31 and 41). The evidence from Worcester suggests that the fortifications were systematically dismantled to allow for planned suburban growth in the mid- to late tenth century. If the archaeological horizon for the origins of suburban expansion is indeed that early, then certain burhs appear to have had short-lived defensive circuits.

Suburban settlement served to blur the edges of fortified towns. In many senses suburbs subverted the burghal fortifications, encroaching upon those 'islands of authority' and defence while in some instances developing into the later central urban area. They appear to be a significant element in the urban sequence; the documentary evidence discussed above suggests that early suburban occupation was expected, perhaps even encouraged, during the foundation process of burghal fortifications. In some cases the expansion of defences to enclose, in turn, ecclesiastical, royal, and economic institutions may be seen as an urban project coming to full fruition, as suggested at Hereford. In addition to being an early feature of many towns (Keene 1976), some suburbs were surprisingly large and well planned, as the documentary archaeological and topographical evidence demonstrates. Once again such suburbs may have subverted the urbanization process, demonstrating that seigneurial foundation of small towns, away from larger royal foundations, was a profitable course of action. Such seigneurial foundations proliferate from the late twelfth century.

While early suburbs may have subverted they were not subversive in the sense suggested by the stereotypical characterization of medieval suburbs. There can be little doubt that later medieval suburbs did become 'sub' in the ways described above; however, this essay questions the appropriateness of back-projecting such a characterization to the earliest suburban settlements. The con-

trast between intramural and extramural occupation perhaps sharpened over time as boroughs attained legal status and other jealously guarded privileges.

Archaeological evidence shows that suburban plots were laid out in a regular fashion and that initial occupation was not necessarily crowded or industrial in nature. It may be suggested that traditional explanations for suburban settlement, as organic overspill that 'grew' along approach roads, perhaps as housing for the poorest in society, overlook crucial questions concerning the role of suburbs. Certainly the pace of suburban development at Northampton required a new circuit to be constructed perhaps less than a hundred years after the Norman Conquest.

Finally, and crucially, the suburbs which existed outside the late Saxon burhs and which were later enclosed have been overlooked particularly by archaeologists. These suburbs were responsible for changing the physical characteristics of burghal 'islands' and aid our understanding of the shift from defended stronghold to defended town and beyond.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

McMullan, Gordan (ed.). 2000. William Shakespeare, *Henry VIII* (London)

Ruggiers, Paul G (ed.). 1979. 'The Canon Yeoman's Prologue', in Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales: a Facsimile and Transcription of the Hengwrt Manuscript with Variants from the Ellesmere Manuscript* (Norman, OK), tale 48, ll. 103–08

Whitelock, Dorothy (ed.). 1979. *English Historical Documents, c. 500–1042*, 2nd edn (London)

Williams, Ann, and G. H. Martin (eds). 2002. *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation* (London)

Secondary Studies

Abels, Richard P. 1988. *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley)

Addyman, Peter V., and Valerie E. Black (eds). 1984. *Archaeological Papers from York Presented to M .W. Barley* (York)

Astill, Grenville. 2000. 'General Survey 600–1300', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, 1: 600–1540*, ed. by David M. Palliser (Cambridge), pp. 27–49

——, 2006. 'Community, Identity and the Later Anglo-Saxon Town: The Case of Southern England', in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, ed. by Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 15 (Turnhout), pp. 233–54

——, 2009. 'Medieval Towns and Urbanization', in *Reflections: 50 Years of Medieval Archaeology, 1957–2007*, ed. by Roberta Gilchrist and Andrew Reynolds (Leeds), pp. 255–70

Aston, Michael, and James Bond. 2000. *The Landscape of Towns*, rev. edn (Stroud)

Baker, Nigel. 2010. *A Characterisation of the Historic Townscape of Central Hereford, Archaeology Report no.266* (Hereford)

Baker, Nigel, and others. 1992. 'From Roman to Medieval Worcester: Development and Planning in the Anglo-Saxon City', *Antiquity*, 66, 65–74

Ballard, Adolphus. 1904. *The Domesday Boroughs* (Oxford)

Bassett, Steven. 2008. 'The Middle and Late Anglo-Saxon Defences of Western Mercian Towns', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 15, 180–239

Beresford, Maurice W., and H. P. R. Finberg. 1973. *English Medieval Boroughs: A Hand-List* (Newton Abbot)

Biddle, Martin. 1976a. 'Towns', in *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by David M. Wilson (Cambridge), pp. 99–150

——, 1976b. *Winchester in the Early Middle Ages: An Edition and Discussion of the Winton Domesday*, Winchester Studies, 1 (Oxford)

——, 1976c. 'The Evolution of Towns: Planned Towns before 1066', in *The Plans and Topography of Medieval Towns in England*, ed. by Maurice W. Barley, Council for British Archaeology, Research Report, 14 (London), pp. 19–31

Biddle, Martin, and David H. Hill. 1971. 'Late Saxon Planned Towns', *Antiquaries Journal*, 51, 70–85

Blair, John. 2005. *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford)

Bond, James. 1987. 'Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Defences', in *Urban Archaeology in Britain*, ed. by John Schofield and Roger Leech, Council for British Archaeology, Research Report, 61 (London), pp. 92–115

Bourne, L. S. 1996. 'Reinventing the Suburb: Old Myths and New Realities', *Progress in Planning*, 46, 163–84

Britnell, R. H. 1978. 'English Markets and Royal Administration before 1200', *Economic History Review*, 31, 183–96

Brown, Jim. 2006. 'The Archaeology at 46–50 Sheep Street, Northampton', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 34, 103–23

Cameron, Kenneth. 1985. *The Place-Names of Lincolnshire: Volume I*, English Place-Name Society, 58 (Nottingham)

Cannadine, David, and David A. Reeder (eds). 1982. *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History by H. J. Dyos* (Cambridge)

Carter, H. 1976. 'The Geographical Approach: The Town in its Setting', in *The Plans and Topography of Medieval Towns in England*, ed. by Maurice W. Barley, Council for British Archaeology, Research Report, 14 (London), pp. 7–18

Carver, Martin O. H. 1980a. 'Excavations at Three Medieval Tenements in Sidbury Worcester, 1976', in *Medieval Worcester: An Archaeological Framework*, ed. by Martin O. H. Carver, Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society, 3rd ser., 7 (Worcester), pp. 155–219

Chapman, Andy. 1995. '1998–9 Excavation of the Town Defences at Green Street, Northampton', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 28, 25–60

Conzen, Michael R. G. 1960. *Alnwick, Northumberland: A Study in Town Plan Analysis*, Institute of British Geographers Publications, 27 (London)

Darby, Henry C. 1977. *Domesday Geography of England* (Cambridge)

Dodd, Anne (ed.). 2003. *Oxford before the University: The Late Saxon and Norman Archaeology of the Thames Crossing, the Defences and the Town*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monographs, 17 (Oxford)

Dyer, Alan. 2000. 'Appendix: Ranking Lists of English Medieval Towns', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, I: 600–1540*, ed. by David M. Palliser (Cambridge), pp. 747–70

Dyer, Christopher. 1985. 'Towns and Cottages in Eleventh-Century England', in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. H. C. Davis*, ed. by Henry Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore (London), pp. 91–106

Dyos, J. H. 1982. 'Urbanity and Suburbanity', in *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History by H. J. Dyos*, ed. by David Cannadine and David A. Reeder (Cambridge), pp. 19–36

Engels, F. 1996. 'The Great Cities', in *The City Reader: London*, ed. by Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout (London), pp. 58–66

Finn, Rex Welldon. 1973. *Domesday Book: A Guide* (Chichester)

Foard, Glenn. 1995. 'The Early Topography of Northampton and its Suburbs', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 26, 109–22

Giles, Kate, and Christopher Dyer. 2005a. 'Introduction', in *Town and Country in the Middle Age: Contrasts, Contacts and Interconnections, 1100–1500*, ed. by Kate Giles and Christopher Dyer (Leeds), pp. 1–5

Gottdiener, Mark, and Leslie Budd. 2005. *Key Concepts in Urban Studies* (London)

Haslam, Jeremy. 1987. 'Market and Fortress in England in the Time of Offa', *World Archaeology*, 19, 76–93

Heighway, Carolyn M. 1972. *The Erosion of History: Archaeology and Planning in Towns; A Study of Historic Towns Affected by Modern Development in England, Wales and Scotland*, Council for British Archaeology Occasional Papers (London)

Hill, David H. 1987. 'The Saxon Period', in *Urban Archaeology in Britain*, ed. by John Schofield and Roger Leech, Council for British Archaeology, Research Report, 61 (London), pp. 46–53

——, 2000. 'Athelstan's Urban Reforms', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 11, 173–85

Hill, David H., and Alexander Rumble (eds). 1996. *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (Manchester)

Holt, J. C. (ed.). 1987. *Domesday Studies: Papers Read at the Novocentenary Conference of the Royal Historical Society and the Institute of British Geographers, Winchester, 1986* (Woodbridge)

Jones, Michael, David Stocker, and Alan Vince. 2003. *The City by the Pool: Assessing the Archaeology of the City of Lincoln*, Lincoln Archaeological Studies, 10 (Oxford)

Keene, D. J. 1976. 'Suburban Growth', in *The Plans and Topography of Medieval Towns in England*, ed. by Maurice W. Barley, Council for British Archaeology, Research Report, 14 (London), pp. 71–88

Kurtz, R. A., and J. B. Eicher. 1958. 'Fringe and Suburb: A Confusion of Concepts', *Social Forces*, 37, 32–37

Lee, F. 1954. 'A New Theory of the Origins and Early Growth of Northampton', *Archaeological Journal*, 110, 164–174

Lutters, Wayne G., and Mark S. Ackerman, 1996. *An Introduction to the Chicago School of Sociology*, <http://userpages.umbc.edu/~lutters/pubs/1996_SWLNote96-1_Lutters, Ackerman.pdf> [accessed 14 March 2013]

Maitland, Frederic W. 1897. *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge)

——, 1898. *Township and Borough* (Cambridge)

Martin, G. H. 1985. 'Domesday Book and the Boroughs', in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, ed. by Peter Sawyer (London), pp. 43–63

McManus, R., and P. Ethington. 2007. 'Suburbs in Transition: New Approaches to Suburban History', *Urban History*, 34, 317–37

Milne, Gustav. 1990. 'King Alfred's Plan for London?', *London Archaeologist*, 6, 206–07

——, 2001. *Excavations at Medieval Cripplegate, London: Archaeology after the Blitz, 1946–68* (London)

Museum of London. 2000. *The Archaeology of Greater London: An Assessment of Archaeological Evidence for Human Presence in the Area Now Covered by Greater London* (London)

Oxford English Dictionary, <http://www.oed.com> [accessed 25 June 2010]

Palliser, David M. 1984. 'York's West Bank: Medieval Suburb or Urban Nucleus?', in *Archaeological Papers from York Presented to M. W. Barley*, ed. by Peter V. Addyman and Valerie E. Black (York), pp. 101–08

Palliser, David M., T. R. Slater, and E. P. Dennison. 2000. 'The Topography of Towns, 600–1300', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, I: 600–1540*, ed. by David M. Palliser (Cambridge), pp. 153–86

Park, Robert E., Ernest W. Burgess, and Roderick D. McKenzie. 1967. *The City* (Chicago)

Rawcliffe, C. 2005. 'Suburban Hospitals', in *Town and Country in the Middle Age: Contrasts, Contacts and Interconnections, 1100–1500*, ed. by Kate Giles and Christopher Dyer (Leeds), pp. 251–74

Reynolds, Susan. 1977. *An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns* (Oxford)

——, 1987. 'Towns in Domesday Book', in *Domesday Studies: Papers Read at the Novocentenary Conference of the Royal Historical Society and the Institute of British Geographers: Winchester, 1986*, ed. by J. C. Holt (Woodbridge), pp. 295–309

Sawyer, Peter. 1968. *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks, 8 (London)

——, 1985a. 'Domesday Studies since 1886', in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, ed. by Peter Sawyer (London), pp. 1–4

——— (ed.). 1985b. *Domesday Book: A Reassessment* (London)

Schledermann, Helmuth. 1970. 'The Idea of a Town: Typology, Definitions and Approaches to the Study of the Medieval Town on Northern Europe', *World Archaeology*, 2, 115–27

Schofield, John. 1999. 'Landscapes of the Middle Ages: Towns, 1050–1500', in *The Archaeology of Britain: An Introduction from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Industrial Revolution*, ed. by John Hunter and Ian Ralston (London), pp. 210–27

——, 2007. 'Urban Settlement, Part 1: Western Europe', in *The Archaeology of Medieval Europe, I: Eighth to Twelfth Centuries AD*, ed. by James Graham-Campbell with Magdalena Valor (Århus), pp. 111–29

Schofield, John, and Alan Vince. 1994. *Medieval Towns* (London)

Shaw, M. 1997. 'Recent Work in Medieval Northampton: Archaeological Excavations on St Giles Street, 1990, and at St Edmunds's End, 1998', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 27, 101–42

Shoesmith, Ronald. 1982. *Hereford Excavations, II: Excavations On and Close to the Defences*, Council for British Archaeology, Research Report, 46 (London)

Slater, Terry R. 2005. 'Plan Characteristics of Small Boroughs and Market Settlement: Evidence from the Midlands', in *Town and Country in the Middle Age: Contrasts, Contacts and Interconnections, 1100–1500*, ed. by Kate Giles and Christopher Dyer (Leeds), pp. 23–41

Sodden, Iain. 1999. 'A Story of Urban Regeneration: Excavations off St Peter's Walk, Northampton, 1994–7', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 28, 61–127

Stenton, Frank M. 1971. *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (Oxford)

Todorovic, Jane, and Steve Wellington. 2000. *Living in Urban England: Attitudes and Aspirations* (London)

Whitehead, David. 2007. *The Castle Green at Hereford: A Landscape of Ritual, Royalty and Recreation* (Almeley)

Williams, John H. 1982. 'Northampton's Medieval Parishes', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 17, 74–84

Williams, John H., and Dave Farwell. 1983. 'Excavations of a Saxon Site in St. James' Square, Northampton 1981', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 18, 141–52

Worcester City Council. 2007. *Worcester Urban Archaeological Strategy: An Outline Resource Assessment and Research Framework for the Archaeology of Worcester* (Worcester)

The Costs and Consequences of Anglo-Saxon Civil Defence, 878–1066

Richard Abels*

As Professor James Campbell, the late Patrick Wormald, and others have observed, the late Anglo-Saxon state was precocious in its administrative sophistication and the degree of control that the king and his agents exercised over its inhabitants and their economic resources. Professor Campbell (Campbell 1980: 171–72) summarized what he saw to be the salient characteristics of this state in 1066: 'Nearly the whole of the England which William conquered', Campbell averred,

> was divided in an orderly way into shires, and the shires into hundreds. Almost all land was assessed in hides and the like for purposes of taxation and service. Regular subdivision into units of local government and a near-universal system of assessment were of fundamental importance. That the country was divided into shires, each under a royal official, the sheriff, gave a degree of general control and made uniformity in administrative action possible. The system of assessment enabled kings to levy taxes on the country as a whole, sometimes at very high rates. [...] England was so organized as to give its eleventh-century rulers powers which others lacked.

The late Anglo-Saxon system of land assessment expressed in hides and carucates also underlay the state's military organization and the associated public labour required for bridge and fortress work. These 'common burdens' were owed by

---

* The following abbreviations will be used throughout this essay: ASC (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, cited with corrected year, from Swanton 1966); S (charter numbers from Sawyer 1968); Asser ('Asser's *Life of King Alfred*', from Keynes and Lapidge 1983); DB (*Domesday Book*, from Erskine 1987–92, cited by volume and folio).

Richard Abels is chair of the History Department of the United States Naval Academy.

all landowners and were assessed, at least roughly, according to the revenues generated by individual estates, which meant that taxation and public services were rooted — again, at least roughly — in economic capacity (Maitland 1897: 532–45; Abels 1985: 15–25; Abels 1988: 97–108; McDonald and Snooks 1986). The power of the late Anglo-Saxon state was also manifested in its royal writs, law codes, and public courts. As Patrick Wormald (Wormald 1999: 483) concluded in his magisterial study, *The Making of English Law*,

> In the tenth century, the law of English kings intruded into their subjects' lives to an extent that had no Anglo-Saxon precedent. It also had no European parallel. [...] On the continent, the gulf between the age of the *Volksrechte* and that of the Learned Laws was opening. English law was meanwhile moving to the position where, metaphorically if not literally, the king's writ would run throughout his realm.

This is, as Campbell (Campbell 2000) himself admits, a 'maximum view' of the administrative power and sophistication of the late Anglo-Saxon state. Many historians, myself included, would warn against mistaking the aspirations of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman rulers, as expressed in their law codes, writs, and administrative documents, even or perhaps especially, Domesday Book, for the reality on the ground. King Æthelred II, for example, issued a charter (S 877) in 996 which purported to relate 'the crimes by which Wulfbald ruined himself with his lord' (*þa forwyrhto þe Wulfbold hine wyþ his hlaford forworhte*). Indeed, it does detail Wulfbald's many misdeeds against his kinsmen; it also tells of this thegn's repeated refusal to obey the king's orders. Three times he was ordered to restore properties he had seized, three times he ignored the judgement, and three times his wergeld was assigned to the king. Nevertheless, Wulfbald died in possession of all his estates without ever having answered for any of his misdeeds. If Wulfbald 'ruined himself with his lord', the consequences were posthumous. Anglo-Saxon kings, as this case reminds us, were more forceful in enforcing law when the judgement touched upon their own interests or profits than when it merely involved a dispute among their subjects. Nonetheless, I think that most historians would agree that on the eve of the Norman Conquest, England was in comparison with its continental and insular neighbours a much governed, if not always well governed, kingdom. The foundations for the mechanisms of governance lay in the distant past, but the trend from the late ninth century to 1066, although not linear, was towards strengthening royal authority and central government. Not coincidentally, late Anglo-Saxon England was characterized socially and economically by a far greater degree of seignorial power over the free peasantry than had been the case in the pre-Viking period.

A primary engine driving these developments was the civil defence programme initiated by King Alfred the Great after the battle of Edington (878) and extended by his successors to the territories they conquered from the Danes. This costly military reorganization proved effective not only for defending Wessex against the Danes but for transforming Wessex through conquest and consolidation into the kingdom of England. By 'kingdom of England', I mean not only a territorial state but also an 'imagined community', that is, a political community socially and ideologically constructed so as to persuade a disparate population that it belongs to it (Anderson 1991: 5–7): here I am consciously deploying Benedict Anderson's concept divorced from his underlying assumption that such 'imagined communities' are products of 'modernity'. Paradoxically, the erosion of the Alfredian system of civil defence in the second half of the tenth century, Æthelred II's inability to revive it effectively in the face of a new wave of Viking invasions, and Cnut's deliberate dismantling of what remained of a burghal system in order to deter native uprisings also contributed to the growth of centralized power. Dispensing with a civil defence infrastructure of garrisoned fortifications, beacons, and military roads for civil defence, Cnut and his successors relied instead on a paid royal fleet (dismissed by Edward the Confessor); a large contingent of household warriors, the housecarls, who could be used for administrative as well as military purposes; the military households of the earls and other magnates; and ad hoc levies of soldiers, the *fyrd*, which landowners were responsible for assembling upon the basis of their holdings and lordship. To pay for this required systematic levying of taxation, initiated by Æthelred to pay for Thorkell the Tall's mercenary fleet, and continued by Cnut and his Danish successors to pay for their standing navies.

The civil defence measures undertaken by Alfred and his successors were only one of a number of interrelated developments that fostered the growth of centralized government and seignorial power in England between the late ninth and mid-eleventh centuries. Nonetheless, responses to civil defence needs undeniably played a critical role in this process. The military reforms of the late ninth and first half of the tenth century literally transformed the landscape of royal administration, dotting the countryside with fortified towns, newly constructed bridges, and roads. The manpower and fiscal demands required to maintain this system drew most of the free landowners of the realm into the royal orbit. The creation of an effective civil defence system against Viking incursions in late ninth-century Wessex depended upon the transformation of the existing 'common burdens' from sporadic and ad hoc levies into regular communal obligations, and this depended upon the fostering of a new ideo-

logical conception of the meaning of kingship and the obligations of subjects to their ruler. Alfred understood his campaign to promote literacy and to educate his people, in particular his royal agents, in wisdom to be just as necessary for the defence of the kingdom which God had committed to his care as his building of burhs or raising of armies. Even if we do not share his belief in a divine economy of rewards and punishments, in a very practical sense he was absolutely correct in envisioning his programmes of civil defence and spiritual renovation as two sides of the same royal coin.

As Professor Nicholas Brooks (Brooks 2003: 173) reminds us, Alfred did not invent Anglo-Saxon civil defence but built upon inherited foundations. Despite the absence of references to sieges in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* prior to the ninth century, it is certain that there were at least some fortified settlements in pre-Viking England. From the middle of the eighth century Mercian kings issued charters that reserved as 'common burdens' the obligation of landowners to provide labour for the construction and maintenance of bridges and fortifications (Brooks 1971; Abels 1988: 43–57). Archaeological excavations have uncovered traces of pre-Alfredian Middle Saxon defences at the Mercian burhs of Tamworth, Winchcombe, and Hereford (Bassett 2007). Nottingham may have been another pre-Viking Mercian burh. Asser (chap. 30) attributes the failure of a combined Mercian-West Saxon army to retake the town from the Vikings in 868 to their inability to breach its walls (*frangere murum*).[1] The most dramatic demonstration of the ability of Mercian kings of the mid-eighth and early ninth centuries to command the labour of their subjects for civil defence is Offa's Dyke. The construction of the Dyke's eighty-one miles (130 km) of ramparts and ditches required a minimum of nine million hours, representing the labour of tens of thousands of conscripted peasants.[2] Once thought to be

---

[1] It is equally possible that the Danes fortified Nottingham when they made winter-quarters there in 867, as they were to do at Reading in 871 (Asser, chap. 35) and at Repton in 873 (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 1992; Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001). Neither the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* nor Asser imply that the Vikings met resistance at Nottingham or had to take the place by force.

[2] The figure is based on David Hill's and Margaret Worthington's estimate that the Dyke's rampart was originally around 8 m high and 10 m wide, and was complemented by a ditch 2 m deep and 4 m wide on the Welsh side. My calculations are a best case scenario that assumes that a worker could excavate one cubic yard (0.765 m³) of earth per hour from a five-foot-deep trench in ordinary soil. This is based upon Beach 1897: 73. The 1907 *Engineer Field Manual* of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, p. 378, estimates that, depending on the quality of soil, an individual equipped with spade and pick axe could excavate from 1.5 to 3 y³ (1.15–2.3 m³) in a day's labour. These estimates are undoubtedly too generous, as they assume the use of early twentieth-century manufactured steel tools that would have been far more efficient than the

merely a frontier marker, the Dyke has been persuasively interpreted by David Hill and Margaret Worthington (Hill and Worthington 2003) as a military barrier dividing Mercia from a recently resurgent Powys.

In early ninth-century Kent, both Canterbury and Rochester probably had defensible walls. The advent of the Vikings led the rulers of Kent, beginning with the Mercian king Offa in 792 (S 134), to impose upon landowners the obligation to fortify strongholds 'against the pagans' (*pontis constructionem et arcis munitionem contra paganos*). In several early ninth-century Kentish charters (S 168, 186), the obligation to pull down fortresses — apparently referring to Viking field fortifications — was added to the now common burdens of *fyrd* service, bridge construction, and maintenance of fortresses. Evidence for fortification elsewhere is weaker. The Northumbrians besieging the Danes in York in 867 were able to breach the city's Roman walls because, according to Asser (chap. 27), 'the city had not as yet in those times strong and stout walls': note the implication that in 893 York's defences were 'strong and stout'. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* reports, on the other hand, that in 877 King Alfred was unable to dislodge by force a Viking army that had taken refuge in the 'fortress' (*on þam fæstene*) of Exeter. The defensible condition of Exeter's Roman walls may have been a result of a refurbishment during the reign of Alfred's father King Æthelwulf, inspired by that king's visit to the new Leonine City of Rome in 855. Winchester's defences may also have been restored in the mid-ninth century when tradition credits Bishop Swithun (d. 862) with having had a bridge and a gate built there. King Æthelwulf in 846 issued the first unimpeachable West Saxon charter (S 298) reserving the common burdens. Interestingly, that charter names only *fyrd* service and bridge construction (Brooks 1971: 81–82; Abels 1988: 55). The omission of fortress work is made even more striking by its appearance in a charter of King Æthelwulf recording a grant of land in Kent in 843 (S 293). What one is to make of this is unclear, but the first West Saxon charter with a good claim to authenticity that mentions fortress work is S 326, recording a grant of land in Wiltshire in 860 by Æthelwulf's son Æthelbald. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*'s famous tale of the slaying of King Cynewulf in 757 suggests also that some royal estates in pre-Viking Wessex were fortified with palisades and defensible gates.

digging implements available in the early Middle Ages. Based on the observations of Radu Volpe in the 1930s, Paolo Squatriti (Squatriti 2002: 40–41) concluded that 'a modestly motivated and simply equipped human excavator seldom shifts more than 1.5m^3 of earth in a working day of digging'. On the logistics for the construction of Offa's Dyke, see also Hill 1977; Hill 1985. The enormous resources devoted to constructing this earthwork makes it unlikely that it served merely as a border marker (Fox 1955) or even a 'control line' to regulate trade between Wales and Mercia (Noble 1983a; Noble 1983b).

The novelty of Alfred's civil defence programme is not that he built or restored forts or equipped towns with rampart and ditch defences. What Wessex had lacked, and what Alfred supplied, was a defensive *system*.[3] As king

[3] Jeremy Haslam (Haslam 1987), noting the reservation of bridge and fortress work in Mercian charters of the late eighth century, suggested that Æthelbald and Offa used the 'common burdens' to create a network of fortified towns and fortresses from which they administered Mercia and its dependencies. Stephen Bassett (Bassett 1996: 155–57; Bassett 2007) developed this suggestion and attempted to demonstrate the existence of a pre-Viking Mercian burghal network, which was a key reason for Mercian military success in the eighth century and which 'was almost certainly the prototype of the much better known burghal system employed by Alfred in Wessex in the late ninth century, and by his children, Edward the Elder and Æthelflæd, over the rest of England south of the Humber' (Bassett 2007: 58). The evidence Bassett adduces for this supposed Mercian burghal system, however, is extremely weak. His argument rests upon the reservation of the 'common burdens' in Mercian charters from the mid-eighth century onwards; the resemblance between the pre-tenth-century defences excavated at Tamworth and Winchcombe, both in western Mercia; and the importance of these two burhs and of Hereford, which may have also had defences, in the late eighth and early ninth centuries (Bassett 2007: 83). Of eastern Mercia, the most that Bassett can offer is, 'while we cannot establish the same beyond doubt for any of the east midland places without Roman walls which became shire towns, it may well be that they (all but one of which are explicitly said to have had defences while they were in Danish hands), were chosen as the centres for Danish armies because of their prior existence as important Anglo-Saxon settlements with substantial, clearly defined hinterlands. In one instance, the burh at Bedford, it was the place's "citizens [*burgware*] who dwelt there before"' who are said to have submitted to Edward the Elder in 915, which adds weight to this argument (Bassett 2007: 83). Bassett concludes: 'It is likely, then, that by the early ninth century there were fortified places situated at regular intervals throughout the kingdom of Mercia. A planned network of this sort must have been invaluable, not only for the maintenance of the kingdom's security and cohesion, but also for the devolved conduct of a wide range of administrative, judicial, fiscal and broadly economic matters. It is very likely that each fortified settlement had a clearly defined rural territory assigned to it, which it was responsible for protecting and from which it drew the men who were required to fulfill the "threefold obligation"' (Bassett 2007: 83). The archaeological evidence for a Mercian network of burhs, however, is slight, amounting to the excavation of pre-tenth-century defences at two burhs and possibly a third. Nor is the charter evidence as conclusive as either Haslam or Bassett makes it out to be. In fact, the 'common burdens' were only sporadically reserved in charters issued by Mercian kings of the eighth and ninth centuries. Between 749 (S 92), when the 'common burdens' are first mention in a charter, and 875, there are about fifty charters that have a good claim to be authentic. Of these, only thirteen reserve the obligation to build bridges and fortifications. If we exclude land grants in Kent, the figure is seven of twenty-six. If a 'planned network' of fortified places existed in pre-Viking Mercia, it has left no traces in the historical record. The Viking invasions and conquest of Mercia provide no evidence for the existence of garrisoned burhs — the only siege mentioned is of Danish forces by a combined army of Mercians and West Saxons — let alone a network of them.

he created a *unified system* of West Saxon civil defence based upon an integrated network of permanently garrisoned forts and fortified towns that were designed to support one another and to act in tandem with the West Saxon *fyrd*, which he reorganized into a standing, mobile field force. The result was what modern military writers term a 'defence in depth' strategy. Alfred's strategic design is best illuminated by the well known and still controversial document known as the 'Burghal Hidage'. Whether or not the extant text was composed in the reign of Edward the Elder as a tool for shiring the Midlands, as David Hill (Hill 1969; Hill 1996; Hill 2001) and others have suggested, the Burghal Hidage's geographical focus on Wessex and the presence in it of several emergency forts that had been abandoned by the early or mid-tenth century clearly suggest that it was based upon an Alfredian administrative document.

The burhs in the Burghal Hidage are listed in a strict geographical order that makes a clockwise circuit around Wessex (Hill 1969: 84–92; Hill and Rumble 1996). As Jeremy Haslam observed (Haslam 2006), this citation order suggests that the fortresses were conceived of as a unitary system by the drafter of the document. The physical siting of the burhs leads to a similar conclusion. The thirty West Saxon forts and fortified towns of the Burghal Hidage not only dominated Wessex's 'lines of communication', that is, its navigable rivers, coasts, and roads, but were located such that no place in the kingdom was more than twenty miles (thirty kilometres) from a fortress and no burh lay more than forty miles (sixty-five kilometres) from another (Abels 1988: 68–76; Abels 1998: 194–207). Thus placed, the garrisons of each burh not only could operate in tandem with the *fyrd* but could easily assemble together for larger expeditions. In short, the fortresses in the system were built to achieve a single goal — to implement a single overall strategic concept and to ensure a single outcome.

The sheer scale of construction implied by the Burghal Hidage is enormous. Alfred's new burhs and those that lacked Roman stone walls were defended by ditches and earthen ramparts. These ramparts, on the average, were about three metres high and about nine to twelve metres wide. As with Offa's Dyke, dump construction was the rule, though the earthen walls were often reinforced with turf and timber revetments, and, in some cases, crowned with wooden palisades. Construction of Wallingford's almost three thousand metres of bank would alone have absorbed more than 120,000 man hours of labour (Radford 1970; Biddle 1976: 126–34; Yorke 1995: 115–23). The excavations conducted at Cricklade by C. A. Ralegh Radford and Jeremy Haslam (Radford 1972; Haslam 2003) indicate that the Alfredian burh's defensive circuit stretched for 2083 m. Cricklade, like other non-Roman Alfredian burhs, was defended by an earthen wall and a series of ditches (three in all) separated from the wall

by a six-metre-wide berm. The burh's ramparts were about 2.5 m high and 6 m wide. The dump construction of the town's defences was simple and required little skilled labour. The rampart was a timber-revetted clay and turf bank, the material of which was obtained from the burh's ditches. Haslam (Haslam 2006: 132) calculates that the rampart comprised about 34,200 m³ of material: 'On the premise that a team of 4 men could have built 2m³ of bank in a day's work, the whole defensive circuit would have been completed in 68,400 working days, or by 1000 men working for 68.4 working days, or 13.6 weeks of 5 working days — say around 4 months.' Haslam estimates that Cricklade's basic defence system, which comprised an intramural walkway made of laid stone and a timber pailsade in addition to its ditches and bank, would have required around eight months of labour from a thousand-man team. Even if we make the generous assumption that ninth-century Anglo-Saxon workers with primitive digging tools were able to match the productivity expected from early twentieth-century American soldiers constructing field fortifications equipped with steel picks and spades, Cricklade's defences would still have required at a minimum the labour of a thousand men for two full months (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 1907: 378). Either estimate underscores the massive effort that went into constructing the thirty-one burhs of the Burghal Hidage. To go by Haslam's figures for Cricklade, the entire project of the Burghal Hidage would have involved in excess of 1.4 million working days of labour.

Haslam's purpose in estimating the time needed to construct Cricklade's defences is to demonstrate the plausibility of his thesis that the entire burghal system outlined in the Burghal Hidage was completed in the fifteen month period between Alfred's victory at Edington in May 878 and the retreat of Viking forces threatening Wessex from Cirencester and Fulham in September 879. Whether or not one accepts Haslam's thesis in its entirety, the most plausible historical context for the construction of a line of burhs along the upper Thames River is the period before 883. The middle and upper reaches of the river formed a natural barrier between Wessex and Mercia. This was, however, a permeable frontier that could be crossed at several fords and Roman roads supported by bridges. Based on their study of the topography of Alfred's civil defence system in the Thames River valley, Dr John Baker and Dr Stuart Brookes (Baker and Brookes 2013: chap. 5) conclude that Bath, Cricklade, Southwark, Wallingford, and Oxford 'formed a blockade against movement along important roads, either standing at Thames crossing points or at network hubs which an invading army might exploit [...] [and] blocked a large number of points of access to the West Saxon road network, including both ends of the strategically important route from London to Cirencester' (Baker and Brookes

2013: 293). The strategic importance of Cricklade, for example, was not that it protected against Viking fleets rowing up the Thames, but that it lay astride one of the major land routes into Wessex from Mercia: the main Roman road connecting Cirencester to Silchester where that road crossed the river. Wallingford, which was possibly a double burh, and Oxford, on the river's north bank, were well placed to police the Icknield Way and the several river crossings that lay between them. The vulnerability of this area to attack is underscored by the seven herepaths — military roads — that lie in that area. Wallingford's strategic importance is attested by 2400 hides allocated to its defence.

These burhs of the middle and upper Thames River valley, in short, were not designed to counter attacks by Viking fleets rowing up the Thames but to impede invasion from the north (Baker and Brookes 2013: chap. 5). The strategic rationale behind the burhs at Sashes and Southwark was different. An island fort that lay upriver of London, the burh at Sashes was designed to prevent Viking fleets coming up from London, such as the 'great army' that wintered at Fulham in 878/9. Southwark may have eventually served as the southern half of a double burh with London, but since London does not appear in the Burghal Hidage, the strategic purpose of the burh was likely to guard against Viking fleets making base there and entering eastern Wessex by way of the two major Roman roads that lead south from Southwark. That the burghal system of the middle and upper Thames River valley looks towards the north and that Sashes and Southwark defend, respectively, from invasion up the Thames and from land routes into Sussex, Surrey, and Kent is an argument for the implementation of that system of fortifications at a time when invasion from Mercia was still a threat and London was not yet in Alfred's possession. If this strategic analysis is correct, the most plausible historical context for the burghal system outlined in the Burghal Hidage is the period between Alfred's victory at Edington in 878 and the submission of Mercia's de facto ruler ealdorman Æthelred to Alfred in 883 (S 218), at which time London was probably under Danish control.

Constructing defences was only the first step. To be effective, Alfred's burhs required both maintenance and garrisoning. He provided for this, and the Burghal Hidage shows us how. As is well known, Version A of the Burghal Hidage (BL, MS Cotton Otho B. xi) has an addendum that posits the number of men needed to defend a length of wall and, from that, calculates the number of hides of land that must be assigned to a burh to obtain the requisite number of men for its maintenance and defence:

> For the maintenance and defence of an acre's breadth of wall sixteen hides are required. If every hide is represented by one man, then every pole [approximately

5 m] of wall can be manned by four men. Then for the maintenance of twenty poles
of wall eighty hides are required. (Keynes and Lapidge 1983: 193–94)

The Burghal Hidage's assessment figures represent the number of men required
for the garrisoning and upkeep of the burhs, and it is clear from the addendum
that these men were to be provided by local landowners at the rate of one per
hide. David Hill (Hill 1969; Hill 1996) attempted to demonstrate that, with a
few exceptions, the theoretical wall length obtained by applying the conversion
formula to the burhs' stated hidage assessments agree remarkably well with their
actual measurements. In the case of Winchester the correspondence is almost
exact; its hidage assessment predicts a wall length of 9900 feet (3017 metres),
while the city's Roman walls measure 9954 feet (3034 metres). Although there
is a rough equivalence between the actual and predicted wall lengths for most
of the other burhs in the list, none come as close as Winchester's. A number
of commentators (Hinton 1996: 154; Rumble 1996: 71; Brooks 1996: 130;
Haslam 2006: 145) have concluded from this that Winchester served as the
model for the conversion formula. This in itself suggests that the Burghal
Hidage originated as an official document. Despite Nicholas Brooks's doubts
(Brooks 1996: 129–32), the rough equivalences between predicted and actual
defences for other burhs in the list suggest that the formula was applied, at least
to some degree, in practice.[4] The variances between the predicted and actual
measurements of the defences of the other burhs in the list, on the other hand,
warn against assuming that the Burghal Hidage is a description of the system as
it was actually implemented.

   To obtain the required number of men for each *burh-ware*, it was necessary
to organize the countryside around the burhs into districts. This was probably
done within the framework of the existing West Saxon shires, under the super-
vision of each shire's ealdorman supported by royal reeves. Peter Sawyer (Sawyer
1978: 227–28), among others, argued that if one eliminates failed burhs and
emergency forts from the calculations, a close correspondence is obtained
between the Domesday hidages of the shires of Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire,
Wiltshire, Dorset, and Berkshire and the sums of the hidages assigned in the
Burghal Hidage to the burhs that lay within these shires. Sawyer's explana-
tion, that the hidage assessments of these shires were reduced after the Viking

---

[4] The establishment of a correspondence between the predicted and actual measurements
of the defences of the burhs of the Burghal Hidage has at times smacked of circular argumen-
tation. As David Hill (Hill 2001: 158), the scholar perhaps most responsible for establishing
these equivalences, warned, 'the fact that we know what we want the end product to be leads to
manipulation, massaging, and downright self deception.'

emergency had passed, seems very plausible.[5] The core shires of Wessex go back possibly as far as the reign of King Ine (685–725) and the former kingdoms of Sussex and Surrey probably became 'shires' when they were absorbed into Wessex (Brooks 2003: 154; Yorke 1995: 84–91). Alfred may have been working within the framework of existing large, round shire hidage assessments when he created this civil defence system. That the hidages allocated to the burhs in the Burghal Hidage are in round numbers strongly implies that the dimensions of the burhs were to be dictated by the resources of the burghal districts created to serve it, rather than the other way around. Given the discrepancies between the actual and predicted lengths of walls of a number of the burhs, the source of the Burghal Hidage was more likely a planning document than a description of the system as implemented (Haslam 2006: 145–46): 'The neat equation of men, hides and lengths of defences', Haslam concludes, 'seems therefore to have been more of the nature of an administrative convenience, if not contrivance, rather than an operational reality.'

Alfredian civil defence entailed much more than the construction, garrisoning, and maintenance of a network of fortified towns. Alfred simultaneously transformed the West Saxon *fyrd* from an ad hoc levy into a standing mobile field force that operated in rotating contingents, and ordered the construction of a small royal fleet to intercept raiders, with ships built according to the king's own design.[6] Although the documentary and archaeological evidence is scanty, Alfredian civil defence probably also involved the building and maintenance of herepaths and bridges, the posting of coast guards; ward and watch on estates and around villages; and the manning of an extensive beacon system. The last must have required considerable manpower resources to maintain. The work of Baker and Brookes (Baker and Brookes 2013: chap. 5) on the Alfredian civil defence in the Thames River valley illuminates the interrelationship of the burhs and beacon system and suggests how both fit in with the military topography of Wessex.

[5] Brooks (Brooks 2003: 160) rejects Sawyer's explanation for the close correspondence between shire assessments in Domesday Book and the assessment in the Burghal Hidage of those boroughs that continued in existence as urban centres into the eleventh century on grounds that 'it is unlikely that kings and lords would have been willing to reduce the pool of communal labour available to them just because there was less need for boroughwork'. He does not, however, offer an alternative explanation.

[6] The doubts I expressed in print (Abels 1998: 305–07) about the practicality and efficacy of Alfred's naval design have been answered to a large degree by the researches of Edwin and Joyce Gifford (Gifford and Gifford 2003). Ole Crumlin-Pedersen (Crumlin-Pedersen 2007) has even suggested that Alfred's design served as the model for the Viking 'longship'.

Alfred intended his burhs to work in tandem with the *fyrd* and with each other. To do this effectively required a 'carefully planned system of communication, based on the established routeways, with observation and signalling posts' (Pollard and Reynolds 2002; Baker and Brookes 2013: chap. 5). An Anglo-Saxon beacon system can be reconstructed from Old English place-names with the elements *bēcun*, *weard*, *tōt*, and *ād* (sometimes preserved in the form Node, a misdivision of *atten ad*, 'at the fire'). The University College London's 'Beyond the Burghal' project team and a private enthusiast Keith Briggs have both examined these sites for intervisibility. The results of their observations indicate that the beacons in Wessex formed a single coherent system in which Cricklade played a critical role as a nodal point connecting Malmesbury to Chisbury or Wallingford.

Interestingly, there is no evidence that ninth-century Kent possessed an integrated beacon-burh system akin to that of Wessex. That and the conspicuous absence of Canterbury and Rochester from the Burghal Hidage suggests that Alfred's civil defence system did not extend to eastern Kent (Baker and Brookes 2013: chap. 6). Historical narratives of ninth-century England often present Kent as having been absorbed into 'Greater Wessex' following King Egbert's victory over the Mercians at *Ellendun* in 825, but this is a simplification of the political situation. Egbert entrusted rule over Kent to his son Æthelwulf, and Æthelwulf was to do the same after he ascended the throne of Wessex. Alfred's brother Æthelred assumed direct rule over both Wessex and Kent, as did Alfred, but this may have been a consequence of the ongoing Viking attacks. Alfred himself seems to have appointed his eldest son Edward as sub-king of Kent after the emergency passed in the late 890s. The system outlined in the Burghal Hidage was designed to defend Wessex. The defence of eastern Kent was left to the devices of its ealdorman and its two great prelates, the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Rochester.

Alfred's civil defence system was extraordinarily costly and required an unprecedented amount of sustained labour from the free West Saxon population. Earlier Anglo-Saxon kings were capable of mobilizing large numbers of men for the construction of impressive public works. One need only mention in this context Offa's Dyke. But erecting a dyke was a one-time affair. Alfred's civil defence system required sustained labour and a steady stream of revenue to maintain it. On paper at least, to man and maintain Wessex's thirty burhs required 27,071 men, which does not include the manpower needed to garrison those fortifications that were in Kent. Perhaps another couple of thousand would have served in Alfred's mobile field army, the *fyrd*. As Nicholas Brooks (Brooks 1979: 18–19) has observed, Alfred's civil defence system made enormous manpower demands upon his subjects. Given that the total population

of 'Greater Wessex' in 890 (including Oxfordshire but not Essex) could not have much exceeded 450,000, the region's approximate population in 1086, the borough garrisons, at least on paper, constituted at least 6 per cent of the kingdom's total population. In comparison, the Prussian military at the height of the Napoleonic Wars absorbed only 4 per cent of that state's population (Abels 1997: 261). Perhaps as many as one out of every four free adult males in Wessex was serving in garrison forces. At a seed grain ratio of 1:2, it took the true surplus produced by three peasant farmers working 19 ha of arable land to feed just one non-agricultural labourer. The solution lay in what historians once called the *Trimoda Necessitas*, the obligation of landowners to provide army service and labour for the construction and maintenance of fortresses and bridges.

West Saxon kings before Alfred had reserved *fyrd* service and fortress and bridge-work, although the latter two may have been imposed as recently as the reigns of Alfred's father Æthelwulf and older brother Æthelbald (Brooks 1971: 80–82; cf. Abels 1988: 54–56). Before Alfred's reign, however, the common burdens could not have been all that burdensome. Before 878 there were few fortresses in Wessex in need of maintenance and, if Alan Cooper (Cooper 2006: 8–38) is right, even fewer bridges. Bridge-work, according to Cooper (Cooper 2006: 39–65) would not become an onerous burden until the proliferation of bridges in the middle of the tenth century. Borough work, however, was another matter. What Alfred demanded from his subjects after Edington was unprecedented in the history of Wessex. And, unsurprisingly, his demands met with considerable resistance from the great landowners, who were not eager to send so much of their rural labour to the new burhs. 'And what of the great trouble and vexation', Asser (chap. 91; Keynes and Lapidge 1983: 101–02) asked plaintively, 'he had with his own people, who voluntarily submit to little or no labour for the common needs of the kingdom?' Without effective mechanisms for enforcing the royal will, Alfred had to rely on persuasion. As Asser put it:

> By gently instructing, cajoling, urging, commanding, and (in the end, when his patience was exhausted) by sharply chastising those who were disobedient and by despising popular stupidity and stubbornness in every way, [King Alfred] carefully and cleverly exploited and converted his bishops and ealdormen and nobles, and his thegns most dear to him, and reeves as well (in all of whom, after the Lord and the king, the authority of the entire kingdom is seen to be invested as is appropriate), to his own will and to the general advantage of the whole realm.

But even Alfred's persuasive skills on occasion fell short. The ultimate sanction that Asser could muster for those who remained recalcitrant and disobeyed

Alfred's commands to construct fortresses was the spectre of Vikings ravaging their unprotected lands. Asser conjures up the image of repentant nobles weeping over the loss of their 'fathers, spouses, children, servants, slaves, handmaidens, the fruits of their labours and all their possessions', who now, much too late, 'loudly applaud the king's foresight and promise to make every effort to what they had previously refused — that is, with respect to constructing fortresses and to the other things of general advantage to the whole kingdom' (Asser, chap. 91).

Asser echoes here the language of the exemption clauses of charters. But phrases such as *de arcibus construendis et ceteris communibus communis regni utilitatibus* (Asser, chap. 91; Stevenson 1904: 79) are more than mere echoes. They are an ideological expression. For Asser and Alfred, civil defence was a communal responsibility because the good it conferred was to the general advantage of the entire kingdom. It is here, I believe, that we must broaden our definition of what civil defence entailed in the ninth and tenth centuries (Abels 1998: 220–21). In the aftermath of Edington, at the same time that Alfred was 'cajoling and threatening' his nobles to build and man the burhs, Alfred undertook an equally ambitious effort to revive learning and spirituality in his kingdom. It entailed the recruitment of clerical scholars from Mercia, Wales, and abroad to enhance the tenor of the court and of the episcopacy; the establishment of a court school to educate his own children and those of his nobles; an attempt to require literacy of all those who held offices of authority; a series of translations into the vernacular of Latin works that Alfred deemed 'most necessary for all men to know'; the compilation of a chronicle detailing the rise of Alfred's kingdom and house; and the issuance of a law code that presented the West Saxons as a new people of Israel and their king as a just and divinely inspired Christian law-giver.

This enterprise was to Alfred's mind as essential for the defence of his realm as the building of the burhs. 'The temptation we must resist', Simon Keynes (Keynes 2003: 197) wisely admonishes, 'is to stand back and admire a multiplicity of "different" Alfreds [...] the soldier, the law-maker, the statesman, the educator, and the scholar [...]. The genuine Alfred of the late ninth century was [...] the integrated Alfred, for whom all these things were inseparable aspects of his determination to discharge the responsibilities of his high office for the good of his subjects and in the service of God.' Burhs, *fyrds*, and ships were the material expressions of civil defence; wisdom and piety were its spiritual dimensions. As Alfred observed in the preface to his translation of Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care* (Sweet 1971: 2, 3), kings who fail to obey their divine duty to promote learning can expect earthly punishment to befall their people.

Conversely, the pursuit of wisdom, he assured the readers of his *Boethius*, is the surest path to power. The portrayal of the West Saxon resistance to the Vikings by Asser and the authors of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was more than mere rhetoric or 'propaganda'. It reflected Alfred's own belief in a doctrine of divine rewards and punishments rooted in a vision of a hierarchical Christian world-order in which God is the Lord to whom kings owe obedience and through whom they derive their authority over their followers. Alfred's need to persuade his nobles to undertake work for the 'common good' coincided with his desire to strengthen and deepen the conception of Christian kingship that he had inherited. He did so by building on the theocratic legacy of earlier kings and clerical writers, English and Carolingian alike, much as he had built upon and extended the administrative foundations he inherited from earlier West Saxon kings. This was not a cynical use of religion to manipulate his subjects into obedience, but an intrinsic element of Alfred's world-view. Alfred's image of theocratic kingship founded upon the relationship of 'lordship' which God Himself had established for the ordering of Christian society meant that, while he respected and 'loved' his bishops and abbots, he did so as their lord and not their partner. James Campbell (Campbell 2003: 9–12) astutely points out that the balance of power between bishops and kings south of the Humber shifted decisively in favour of the latter during the ninth century. Alfred disposed of bishoprics as he saw fit, appointing foreign prelates to the important sees of Canterbury and Sherborne. And although Alfred prided himself upon his patronage of the clergy, he saw no contradiction in seizing and incorporating into his civil defence system vast amounts of strategically located ecclesiastical lands for the 'general advantage of the entire kingdom' (Fleming 1985; cf. Dumville 1992: 29–54). All this led to an enhanced conception of theocratic kingship through which Alfred and his successors sought to unite their subjects for their common defence as a people.

An ideology of kingship developed in the tenth century in parallel with the transformation of the West Saxon monarchy first into kings of the Anglo-Saxons and, finally, into kings of the English. This ideology had a dual foundation of royal lordship, in which the king was the personal lord of all of his subjects, and theocracy, in which the king was the *Christus rex*. In Alfred's conception of Christian kingship, royal lordship and theocracy were two expressions of the same royal authority. The fullest expression in English of this vision of theocratic royal lordship appears in the law codes that Archbishop Wulfstan drafted on behalf of Æthelred II and Cnut in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Æthelred's legislation from a council at Enham, near Andover, in 1008, at a time when civil defence was very much on the minds of the king and his bish-

ops, begins with an exhortation to follow one king and one Christian God and concludes by enjoining: 'And let us loyally support one royal lord, and all of us together defend our lives and our country, to the best of our ability' (v Atr 35).[7]

If measured by effectiveness, Alfred's military establishment was worth the money and manpower expended upon it. Not only did it prove the salvation of Wessex in the 890s, but in the hands of Alfred's children and grandchildren it became a finely honed instrument of aggression. Whether Alfred conceived of the burhs he ordered built as 'islands of royal authority', there can be little doubt that Edward and Æthelflaed did. Their burhs were less intended as elements of a civil defence system than as anchors for the consolidation of conquest. Nicholas Brooks (Brooks 2003: 173) may be right that 'the pressing military, religious and educational concerns that so dominated [Alfred's] thoughts and those of his advisers were not, it would seem, an appropriate seedbed for fundamental governmental reform'. But what he gave his children and grandchildren were the elements upon which to erect a new system of governance. The result was the creation through conquest of a unified kingdom of England. The true fruit of Alfred's success was the halcyon reign of his great-grandson Edgar the Peaceable.

As I have argued elsewhere (Abels 2001), the consequence of peace was the abandonment of the more costly elements of Alfredian civil defence. It is difficult to say whether this occurred during the reign of Edgar or those of his successors, Edward the Martyr and Æthelred II. Nor should we think that the system was dismantled all at once. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Alfredian and Edwardian burhs were gradually transformed into market towns in the course of the tenth century as threats of foreign invasion or popular insurrection faded. Burghal defences at this time were slighted to allow better commercial access and some forts were abandoned entirely. During Edgar's reign we also see the beginnings of the 'privatization' of military forces, as the *fyrd* quotas owed by bishops and abbots were withdrawn from contingents led by the shire reeves and ealdormen and placed under the command of *archiductores* appointed by these prelates. This trend spread to the laity during the turmoil that characterized Edward the Martyr's reign (975–978) and the first years of the young Æthelred II. This is not to suggest that Edgar's England was defenceless. The encomia for him in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and in the homilies of

---

[7] The acts of this council are preserved in both Latin (vi Æthelred) and Old English (v Æthelred) versions. For the homiletic quality of Wulfstan's law codes, see Lawson 1992 and Wormald 1999: 449–64.

Aelfric of Eynsham emphasize that he defended his realm through naval power. John of Worcester's assertion that Edgar had a fleet of 3,600 ships deployed in three equal fleets is clearly an exaggeration. But there is good reason to believe that it was during Edgar's reign that the 'common burdens' were extended to include the supply and maintenance of ships through the creation of 300 or 310 hide naval districts later termed 'ship sokes'.

The abandonment of elements of the Alfredian system of civil defence did not alter the fact that the implementation of that system and its expansion by Alfred's children and grandchildren had fundamentally altered the character of English government and society. Alfred's court had represented the 'common burdens' as communal labour necessary for the common good, but it is clear from Asser's account of the resistance he encountered (chap. 91) that neither the West Saxon nobility or its peasantry fully accepted them as inescapable duties incumbent upon all landed holdings. Nicholas Brooks calculates that fewer than 20 per cent of the extant charters issued between 750 and 850 contained exclusion clauses reserving *fyrd* service and bridge and fortress work to the Crown (Brooks 1971: 73). This changed dramatically over the course of the tenth century, by the end of which the military burdens were conceived of as universal and inescapable. Alan Cooper in his study of medieval English bridge building and royal power (Cooper 2006: 60), demonstrates statistically the change in attitude of the royal authorities towards the 'common burdens':

> Of 95 genuine ninth-century charters, 80 contain general immunities, of which only 33 exclude bridge-work; of 234 genuine charters from between 901 and 958, 210 contain general immunities, of which 185 exclude bridge-work; of 168 charters from between 959 and 1000, 158 include general immunities, of which 143 exclude bridge-work.

On the basis of changes in the language used in the charters, Cooper regards the 930s as a watershed period (although changes in the production of charters should be borne in mind). From the 930s on, immunities clauses describe the services and dues from which the land was to be exempt in increasingly servile terms, with the metaphor of the 'yoke' often invoked. At the same time, the charters begin to characterize the three military burdens as the 'common work' and as burdens common to all. The impression is one of an ongoing campaign of propaganda to justify the Crown's exaction of *fyrd* service and bridge- and fortress work as universal exactions necessary for the common welfare of the realm (Cooper 2006: 61–65).

Alfred's building programme took place against the backdrop of an existential threat to Wessex and the 'English people'. To build his burhs, Edward

the Elder mainly used the armies with which he subdued territories under Viking rule. By the 930s, however, the requirement was less to build fortresses and bridges than to regularly maintain and refurbish defences. The obligation to maintain boroughs and bridges in late Anglo-Saxon England reinforced the traditional connection between landholding and military service to the Crown. The ability of the Crown to regularize the exaction of the 'common burdens' both reflected and was instrumental in establishing the power of centralized government in the emerging English state. Alfred's and his successors' use of the common burdens for the foundation for civil defence meant that civil defence, like other aspects of tenth-century English government, was based on lordship and land tenure. The result was the strong centralized royal government of late Anglo-Saxon England, which derived its strength from a partnership between the king and his agents and the local landholding elite, whom the king held responsible for producing the required public labour from their 'warland' tenants on the basis of one man from each hide of land (Faith 1997: 99–105). The development of the system in the tenth and eleventh centuries can be traced through law codes. Æthelstan's second law code, issued at Grately, Hampshire, around 930, ordered that every fortress be repaired by a fortnight after Rogation days (II As 13). By the early eleventh century this obligation had been extended to include the repair of bridges, 'whenever the occasion demands, as may be ordered for our common need', and the preparation of warships as soon after Easter as possible (V Atr 26. 1, 27; II Cnut 10, 65). Although this subject needs to be explored in more detail, the law codes suggest that military and police duties blurred together in the tenth century, and that the mechanisms developed for civil defence against foreign enemies and for the punishment of domestic disturbers of the king's peace, such as the obligation of watch and ward, overlapped.

The early eleventh-century text on estate management, the *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum*, reveals the extent to which civil defence had become a duty attached to the holding of land and the critical importance of lordship in its execution. The *Rectitudines* sets forth the rights and obligations of a lord or an estate (probably in Wessex) and of the various groups of men who dwelled upon it under him. The text begins with the holder of the tenure, termed here a 'thegn'. 'The law of the thegn', we are told,

> is that he be entitled to his book-right, and that he shall contribute three things in respect to his land: military service [*fyrdfæreld*], and the repairing of fortresses [*burhbote*] and work on bridges [*brycgeweorc*]. Also in respect of many estates, further land-dues arise on the king's order, such as service connected with the deer

fence at the king's residence, and equipping a guard ship [*frithscip*], and guarding the coast [*sæweard*], and guarding the lord [*heafodweard*], and military watch [*fyrd-weard*], almsgiving and church dues, and many other things. (Liebermann 1903: 444–53; Douglas and Greenaway 1953: 875–79)

The thegn's primary obligation to the king is acquitting the common burdens attached to his land. But this is far from his only duty. On the king's command, he is also responsible for equipping a guard ship, guarding the coast, and 'military watch', all of which relate to civil defence. The thegn was not expected to personally repair fortresses and bridges, work on the king's deer hedge, or even guard the coast. These duties belonged to other tenants. For instance, the cottar, a free tenant endowed with five or more acres, was required to 'defend his lord's inland [that is, to acquit it of services], if so ordered, by keeping watch on the seacoast and by working at the king's deer hedge and such things according to his condition'. Similarly, the tenants-in-chief of Domesday Cheshire were not required by the shire customs to maintain the walls of Chester with their own hands but to provide one man from each hide that they either owned or over which they possessed soke rights (DB 1, fol. 262ᵛ). Consistent with the idea that civil defence was a common responsibility owed by all for the general good, Anglo-Saxon law made all free men responsible in one way or another for its execution. In this sense, all landowners with book-right became royal agents responsible for obtaining from those either personally commended to them or living under their soke the manpower necessary to man the king's armies and navies, ensure the upkeep of borough walls and bridges, and perform watch and ward services as required.

There is evidence as well for the administration of bridge-work for the bridges of Rochester, Chester, London, Huntingdom, Nottingham, and Cambridge (Cooper 2006: 46–59). The general impression received from an examination of this evidence is that bridge maintenance was an expensive undertaking and that 'the obligations were onerous and becoming more onerous as time passed' (Cooper 2006: 57). The arrangements made to maintain the bridge over the Medway at Rochester are preserved in the *Textus Roffensis*, a manuscript written *c.* 1120 that combines a compilation of Anglo-Saxon law codes and a cartulary of Rochester Cathedral Priory and has been thoroughly analyzed by Nicholas Brooks (Brooks 1992; Brooks 1994). The bridge-work list divides responsibility for the maintenance of the bridge's nine piers among the bishop of Rochester, the archbishop of Canterbury, and the king; names the estates responsible for the upkeep of each pier; and specifies the quantity of planking and beams each estate was to supply (Brooks 1994: 16–18). Brooks

concludes from a careful study of the distribution and tenurial histories of the named estates that the obligation for Rochester's *brycgeweorc* lay upon the lathe of Aylesford and that the bishop, archbishop, and king were responsible for the piers assigned to them, not as landlords who owed labour from their own estates in Kent but as organizers of the recruitment of a work force owed by local landowners in the lathe. Although the evidence for the maintenance of the other five bridges is not as full or as early as that for Rochester, they all tell a similar story. The obligation to maintain bridges in late Anglo-Saxon England represented a considerable burden, tended to be distributed widely rather than limited to the locality of the bridge — repair of the bridge over the Leen River in Nottingham fell upon the whole county — and was the shared responsibility of royal officials and the local landowers, whose tenants actually performed the labour (Cooper 2006: 57). We find here, again, a partnership between Crown and country that both promoted royal authority by making the local landowning elites agents of the Crown and enhanced the power of local landowners over their free peasant tenants.

When the Vikings returned in 980 to begin a new age of raiding and invasion, they found a peaceful and wealthy England ripe for pillaging. It was certainly a well administered, or at least highly administered, kingdom in which the central government had in place effective mechanisms for the maintenance of internal order and the raising of revenues. But one should not mistake bureaucratic efficiency and ideological sophistication for military strength. The civil defence systems that Æthelred II and Alfred inherited had much in common. Both relied on ad hoc levies summoned to meet crises, and while Æthelred's England may have had many more defended towns, these burhs lacked the permanent military garrisons that had made them into something more than passive refuges. At least in this sense, King Æthelred was unready to meet the new Viking threat. Despite Æthelred's posthumous reputation for haplessness, he should be credited for attempting to shore up his kingdom's civil defences (Taylor 1992; Abels 1997). Perhaps as early as the 990s (Haslam 2011) he began an ambitious programme of military construction. New boroughs were raised on the sites of Iron Age hill-forts at South Cadbury in Somerset, Old Sarum, in Wiltshire, and Cissbury in Sussex, and Daws Castle in Somerset, while the defences of existing boroughs were refurbished, with stone walls replacing timber revetments and palisades. Æthelred and his advisors, however, lacked Alfred's strategic vision. The construction was conducted in a piecemeal fashion, exemplified by the new hill-forts, each apparently built in consequence of a threat to or the actual sacking of a vulnerable nearby mint. The haphazard character of Æthelred's civil defence programme is also sug-

gested by the siting of Kent's beacons. Unlike the later Armada beacon system, the viewsheds of Kent's Anglo-Saxon beacons look landward and over navigable rivers rather than towards the coast. Baker and Brookes found that Kent's beacons, in contrast to the Alfredian beacon system of the Thames River valley, 'operated in three discrete groups centring on the Medway, Wantsum and eastern Weald, with no apparent point of intervisibility between these networks' (Baker and Brookes 2013: chap. 6). These findings are certainly curious given the seaborne character of the Viking threat to Kent in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. They may indicate no more than that Kent's beacon system, which looked north and west, was set up in an earlier time when coastal attacks represented less of a threat. On the other hand, Æthelred understood the importance of coastal defence and was responsible for refurbishing the defences of Dover, including building there the look-out/beacon of St Mary-in-Castro. That he did not set up an intervisible network of beacons in Kent is indicative of his failure of strategic vision. In short, Æthelred's civil defence projects failed to result in an Æthelredian burghal system to match Alfred's, and, as a consequence, the whole of this ambitious and expensive military construction programme fell considerably short of the sum of its parts.

Æthelred and his advisors responded to the defeats of the 990s as Alfred had a century before, acting to improve England's military forces. In 1008 Æthelred ordered the kingdom to be divided into naval districts of 300 or 310 hides to facilitate the construction and maintaining of a great armada. At the same time, he ordered that a helmet and corselet be supplied from every eight hides 'unremittingly over all England' (ASC 1008). If we go by the hidage total of Domesday Book, this would have meant a fleet of about two hundred ships and armor for nine thousand warriors. This is in itself testimony to the effectiveness of English institutions of governance in the early eleventh century. When these preparations failed to prevent Thorkell the Tall from ravaging the kingdom in the following year, Æthelred responded with an equally impressive programme for national repentence. At Elmham and Bath in 1009 the king issued legislation drafted by Archbishop Wulfstan (v–vi Æthelred and vii Æthelred) that ordered all his subjects to give alms, fast, and pray, and prescribed the litanies that the clergy were to chant to obtain the divine favour necessary for victory (Keynes 2007: 177–201).

None of Æthelred's policies panned out — which brings us to the costs of the failure of civil defence. The amount of cash the English are said to have paid in tribute between 991 and 1016, 240,500 pounds, is so great as to provoke scepticism. And this does not even include the enormous amounts of bread, meat, wine, and beer that the English were forced to supply Viking armies as

provisions in addition to the cash tribute. The solution that Æthelred finally adopted was to hire mercenaries. Between 1009 and 1012 a large Viking fleet under the command of one of the most successful freelance Vikings of the day, Thorkell the Tall, devastated much of southern England. English forces once more proved completely inadequate, and Æthelred in 1012 was forced to pay the raiders an immense tribute, some 48,000 pounds, in addition to supplying them with sufficient food and wine, which in itself was no mean feat. For reasons unknown, Thorkell suddenly decided that it was more profitable to eat at the king's table than to steal food from it. He struck a deal with Æthelred. He and his forty-five ships would defend Æthelred's realm in return for being fed and clothed. To fulfill his end of the bargain Æthelred instituted a regular tax.

Cnut's *lithsmen*, the crews of the forty ships that the new king retained in his service after the rest of his fleet dispersed, may be thought of as the successor to Thorkell's mercenary fleet, just as the *heregeld* he imposed upon his subjects to pay their salaries and for the upkeep of their ships was a continuation of the tax that Æthelred had levied to pay Thorkell and his men. In the changed political circumstances of a conquered kingdom, however, the *lithsmen* became something new, a standing royal mercenary naval force that served both for civil defence and to discourage native resistance, while the hated *heregeld*, characterized by the author of the 1051 entry for the D recension of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as a tax that 'always took precedence over other taxes [...] and oppressed men in manifold ways', was both a manifestation and source of the power that the new regime possessed over its subjects (Abels 2008: 157–58). Fear of rebellion may also explain the archaeological evidence for the razing of Æthelred's new hilltop forts and the slighting of the stone walls of boroughs such as Christchurch in the first half of the eleventh century (Haslam 2003: pt 3; Haslam 2009: 100–02, 104–05). Cnut, with the help of Archbishop Wulfstan, presented himself as an Anglo-Saxon ruler in the mode of Æthelred, but he and his sons used the precocious English bureaucracy they inherited to rule as conquerors.

Over the fifty years that separated Cnut's and William the Bastard's conquests of England, the kingdom, outside of the Welsh and Scottish marches, was largely at peace. The civil defence system that prevailed during Edward the Confessor's reign was well suited to these conditions. It was a mixture of the old and the new. Gone were the ship-sokes and the standing royal fleet, replaced now by ad hoc naval levies from port cities. Gone too were Alfred's and Cnut's standing military forces, the former dispensed with probably by the mid-tenth century and the latter, along with the hated *heregeld* that supported it, by Edward in 1051, in a gesture designed to emphasize his legitimacy

as a scion of the House of Alfred. The Anglo-Saxon *fyrd* returned to being an ad hoc levy raised in times of need. The administration of the *fyrd* in 1066 as revealed by Domesday Book was now regionally, if not nationally, standardized, as the raising of troops became a sort of land tax. The Crown relied upon landowners to produce the assigned quota of soldiers owed from the warland they owned or over which they held soke (Abels 1988: 116–31). Landowners remained responsible for their tenants' performance of fortress and bridgework, although the process by which the latter was commuted into the payment of 'murage' may already have begun. The only new element of Edward's military organization, if indeed it was new, was the deals that the Crown struck with boroughs to commute their military service for cash and with ports in Kent and Sussex to provide naval service at the rate of twenty ships with crews of twenty-one for two weeks, the precursor to the medieval Cinque Ports system (Hooper 1989: 206–07; Rodger 1996: 641). Whether this also entailed the construction of dockyards and ship sheds is unknown. Lordship remained the bond that cemented the civil defence system from top to bottom. As in Edgar's England, the country was dotted with towns, some of which had effective fortifications, though few, if any had permanent garrisons. The term *burh-ware* had all but lost its military connotations and now simply meant burgesses. For most of these fifty years, the maintenance of peace and order internally — that is, policing duties — was a higher priority than civil defence against foreign enemies. That, of course, changed in 1066.

The development of a complex and costly civil defence system in late ninth-century Wessex played a critical role in the state formation of late Anglo-Saxon England. The external threat of the Viking invasions placed enormous stress upon the existing military and political institutions of all the kingdoms of ninth-century England. Only Wessex managed to survive and it did so by Alfred and his successors reorganizing its political, economic, and military structures to emphasize royal power. The most dramatic material expression of this was the burghal network with its supporting road and beacon systems that Alfred created to defend his realm and which his children and grandchildren further developed to expand their territories. The ideological expression was the fostering of a theocratic kingship that sacralized lordship, and which tied all free men to the king through bonds of lordship and Christian devotion. The social, economic, and political changes that Alfred's civil defence initiatives spurred outlived the military reorganization itself, in part because of the correspondence between the mechanisms for the defence of a region and for the maintenance of order within it, and in part because the military districts established to support the burghal network proved valuable to kings from the start for the regulation

of and drawing profit from commerce and currency. Paradoxically, the abandonment of the Alfredian system of civil defence in the second half of the tenth century and Æthelred II's inability to revive it effectively also contributed to the growth of centralized power by necessitating the creation of mechanisms for the systematic levying of taxation to pay first for a mercenary fleet under Æthelred and then, under Cnut and his Danish successors, a standing navy, which was eventually dismissed by Edward the Confessor in a gesture designed to show confidence in the legitimacy of his rule. The Anglo-Saxon state on the eve of the Norman Conquest may not have been a polity organized for war, but its development over the previous two centuries had been directed to a large extent by the needs for civil defence.

Works Cited

Manuscripts

London, British Library, MS Cotton Otho B. xi

Primary Sources

Douglas, David C., and George W. Greenaway. 1953. *English Historical Documents: II, 1042–1189* (London)

Erskine, R. W. H. (gen. ed.). 1987–92. *Alecto County Edition of Domesday Book*, 31 vols (London)

Keynes, Simon, and Michael Lapidge (ed. and trans.). 1983. *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth)

Liebermann, Felix (ed.). 1903. *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols (Halle), I: *Text und Übersetzung*

Stevenson, W. H. (ed). 1904. *Life of King Alfred* (Oxford)

Swanton, Michael (ed. and trans.). 1966. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London)

Sweet, Henry (ed.). 1971. *Alfred the Great's West Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care* (London)

Secondary Studies

Abels, Richard P. 1985. 'Bookland and Fyrd Service in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 7, 1–25

——, 1988. *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley)

——, 1997. 'English Logistics and Military Organisation, 871–1066: The Impact of the Viking Wars', in *Maritime Warfare in Northern Europe: Technology, Organisation, Logistics and Administration, 500 BC–1500 AD*, ed. by Anne Nørgård Jørgensen and

others, Publications from the National Museum, Studies in Archaeology and History, 6 (København), pp. 257–65

——, 1998. *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (London)

——, 2001. 'From Alfred to Harold II: The Military Failure of the Late Anglo-Saxon State', in *The Normans and their Adversaries: Essays in Memory of C. Warren Hollister*, ed. by Richard P. Abels and Bernard S. Bachrach (Woodbridge), pp. 15–30

——, 2008. 'Mercenaries and Paid Men in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Mercenaries and Paid Men: The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by John France (Leiden), pp. 143–65

Abels, Richard P., and Bernard S. Bachrach (eds). 2001. *The Normans and their Adversaries: Essays in Memory of C. Warren Hollister* (Woodbridge)

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London)

Baker, John, and Stuart Brookes. 2013. *Beyond the Burghal Hidage: Anglo-Saxon Civil Defence in the Viking Age,* (Leiden)

Bassett, Steven. 1996. 'The Administrative Landscape of the Diocese of Worcester in the Tenth Century', in *St Oswald of Worcester: His Life and Influence*, ed. by Nicholas P. Brooks and Catherine Cubitt (London), pp. 147–73

——, 2007. 'Divide and Rule? The Military Infrastructure of Eighth- and Ninth-Century Mercia', *Early Medieval Europe*, 15, 53–85

Beach, Capt. William 1897. *Manual of Military Field Engineering for the Use of Officers of the Line*, 3rd edn (Fort Levenworth, KS)

Biddle, Martin. 1976. 'Towns', in *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by David M. Wilson (Cambridge), pp. 99–150

Biddle, Martin, and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle. 1992. 'Repton and the Vikings', *Antiquity*, 66, 36–51

——, 2001. 'Repton and the "Great Heathen Army", 873–4', in *Vikings and the Danelaw: Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress*, ed. by James Graham-Campbell and others (Oxford), pp. 45–96

Brooks, Nicholas P. 1971. 'The Development of Military Obligations in Eighth- and Ninth-Century England', in *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge), pp. 69–84

——, 1979. 'England in the Ninth Century: The Crucible of Defeat', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 29, 1–20

——, 1992. 'Church, Crown and Community: Public Work and Seigneurial Responsibilities at Rochester Bridge', in *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Karl Leyser*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (London), pp. 1–20

——, 1994. 'Rochester Bridge, AD 43–1381', in *Traffic and Politics: The Construction and Management of Rochester Bridge, AD 43–1993*, ed. by Nigel W. Yates and James M. Gibson (Woodbridge), pp. 1–40

——, 1996. 'The Administrative Background to the Burghal Hidage', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 128–50

——, 2003. 'Alfredian Government: The West Saxon Inheritance', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 153–74

Brooks, Nicolas P., and Catherine Cubitt (eds). 1996. *St Oswald of Worcester: His Life and Influence* (London)

Campbell, James. 1980. *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London)

——, 2000. *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London)

——, 2003. 'Placing King Alfred', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 3–23

Cooper, Alan. 2006. *Bridges, Law and Power in Medieval England, 700–1400* (Woodbridge)

Crumlin-Pedersen, Ole. 2007. 'Viking and Anglo-Saxon Longships', paper presented at the 42nd International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, 10 May 2007

Dumville, David N. 1992. *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural, and Ecclesiastical Reform* (Woodbridge)

Faith, Roasmond. 1997. *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (Leicester)

Fleming, Robin. 1985. 'Monastic Lands and England's Defence in the Viking Age', *English Historical Review*, 100, 247–65

Fox, Cyril. 1955. *Offa's Dyke: A Field Survey of the Western Frontier Works of Mercia in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries AD* (London)

France, John (ed.). 2008. *Mercenaries and Paid Men: The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden)

Gelling, Margaret. (ed.). 1983. *Offa's Dyke Reviewed*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 114 (Oxford)

Gifford, Edwin, and Joyce Gifford. 2003. 'Alfred's New Longships', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 283–89

Halsall, Guy. 2003. *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450–900* (London)

Harper-Bill, Christopher, C. J. Holdsworth, and Janet Nelson (eds). 1989. *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown* (Woodbridge)

Haslam, Jeremy. 1987. 'Market and Fortress in England in the Time of Offa', *World Archaeology*, 19, 76–93

——, 2003. 'Excavations on the Defences of Cricklade, Wilts, in 1975', *Internet Archaeology*, 13 <http://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue14/haslam_index.html> [accessed 30 August 2012]

——, 2006. 'King Alfred and the Vikings: Strategies and Tactics, 876–886 AD', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 13, 122–54

——, 2009. 'The Early Development of Late Saxon Christchurch, Dorset, and the Burghal Hidage', *Medieval Archaeology*, 53, 95–118

2011. 'Daws Castle, Somerset, and Civil Defence Measures in Southern and Midland England in the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries' *Archaeological Journal*, 168, 195–226

Hill, David H. 1969. 'The Burghal Hidage: The Establishment of a Text', *Medieval Archaeology*, 13, 84–92

——, 1977. 'Offa's and Wat's Dyke: Some Aspect of Recent Work, 1972–1976', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 79, 21–33

——, 1985. 'The Construction of Offa's Dyke', *Antiquaries Journal*, 65, 140–42

——, 1996. 'The Calculation and Purpose of the Burghal Hidage', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 92–97

——, 2001. 'The Shiring of Mercia — Again', in *Edward the Elder, 899–924*, ed. by Nicholas J. Higham and David H. Hill (Manchester), pp. 144–59

Hill, David H., and Alexander Rumble (eds). 1996. *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (Manchester)

Hill, David H., and Margaret Worthington. 2003. *Offa's Dyke: History & Guide* (Stroud)

——, 1996. 'The Fortifications and their Shires', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 151–59

Hooper, Nicholas. 1989. 'Some Observations on the Navy in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. by Christopher Harper-Bill, C. J. Holdsworth, and Janet Nelson (Woodbridge), pp. 203–13

Nørgård Jørgensen, Anne, and Birthe Clausen (eds). 1997. *Military Aspects of Scandinavian Society in a European Perspective, AD 1–1300* (København)

Keynes, Simon D. 2003. 'The Power of the Written Word: Alfredian England 871–99', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot), pp. 175–98

——, 2007. 'An Abbot, an Archbishop, and the Viking Raids of 1006–7 and 1009–12', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 36, 151–220

Lawson, M. K. 1992. 'Archbishop Wulfstan and the Homiletic Element in the Laws of Æthelred II and Cnut', *English Historical Review*, 107, 565–86

McDonald, John, and G. D. Snooks. 1986. *Domesday Economy: A New Approach to Anglo-Norman History* (Oxford)

Maitland, Frederic W. 1897. *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge)

Noble, Frank. 1983a. *Offa's Dyke Reviewed* (Oxford)

Noble, Frank. 1983b. 'Offa's Dyke Reviewed', M.Phil. thesis, Open University (1978). Partly published in *Offa's Dyke Reviewed*, ed. by M. Gelling, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 114 (Oxford)

Pollard, Joshua, and Andrew Reynolds. 2002. *Avebury: The Biography of a Landscape* (Stroud)

Radford, C. A. Ralegh. 1970. 'The Later Pre-Conquest Boroughs and their Defences', *Medieval Archaeology*, 14, 83–103

——, 1972. 'Excavations at Cricklade, 1948–1963', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, 67, 61–111

Rodger, N. A. M. 1996. 'The Naval Service of the Cinque Ports', *English Historical Review*, 111, 636–51

Roffe, David. 2007. *Decoding Domesday Book* (Woodbridge)

Rumble, Alexander. 1996. 'Diplomatic Subsection', in *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications*, ed. by David H. Hill and Alexander Rumble (Manchester), pp. 69–87

Sawyer, Peter. 1968. *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks, 8 (London); ed. and rev. by S. E. Kelly and S. M. Miller as *The Electronic Sawyer: An Online Version of Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (1999) <http://www.esawyer.org.uk/about/index. html> [accessed 30 August 2013]

——, 1978. *From Roman Britain to Norman England* (New York)

Squatriti, Paolo. 2002. 'Digging Ditches in Early Medieval Europe', *Past and Present*, 176, 11–65

Taylor, Pamela. 1992. 'The Endowment and Military Obligations of the See of London: A Reassessment of Three Sources', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 14, 287–312

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. 1907. *Engineer Field Manual*, Professional Papers of the Corps of Engineering, U.S. Army, 29 (Washington, DC)

Wormald, Patrick. 1999. *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, I: Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford)

Yates, Nigel W., and James M. Gibson (eds). 1994. *Traffic and Politics: The Construction and Management of Rochester Bridge, AD 43–1993* (Woodbridge)

Yorke, Barbara. 1995. *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (London)

A Viking Age Landscape of Defence in the Low Countries? The *Ringwalburgen* in the Dutch Province of Zeeland

Letty ten Harkel

Situated in the Scheldt estuary, in the Dutch province of Zeeland, are five circular fortifications or *ringwalburgen* whose origins are attributed to the latter decades of the ninth century (Figure 9.1). Dutch and Flemish scholarship traditionally regards these sites as defensive structures or *vluchtburgen* (refuges) for the local population in the face of Viking attack (van Dierendonck 2009: 252; van Heeringen 1998; Henderikx 1995: 94–101, 110–11; Huizinga 1935). Over the years, additional *ringwalburgen* and other semicircular fortifications have been identified in other settlements in northern France (Huizinga 1935), Belgium (Huizinga 1935; de Meulemeester 1980; de Meulemeester 1981; de Meulemeester 1990), and the Netherlands (Bartels and Vermeulen 2009; van Dierendonck 2009: 258, 266–67; Dijkstra and de Ridder 2009; van Heeringen 1995d: 69; van Werveke 1965), which have been interpreted in the same light. This chapter has two aims: first, to provide an overview of archaeological investigations in the Zeeland sites and a review of the evidence for other, possibly related, sites;[1] and, second, to revisit the various explanations that have

[1] In 1995, Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars published a comprehensive overview (in Dutch, with an English summary) of the history and archaeology of these *ringwalburgen*, focusing to a large degree on the deserted site of Oost-Souburg, of which

Letty ten Harkel received her Ph.D. in Archaeology from the University of Sheffield in 2010 and is now a researcher at the Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford. This essay is based on work carried out for her M.A. in Medieval Archaeology at the University of York in 2002.

been offered for their construction and question whether their uniform inter-pretation as *vluchtburgen* is tenable.

The Archaeology of the ringwalburgen

Early Research

In 1904, an excavation in Middelburg, the provincial capital of Zeeland, the Netherlands, revealed that the city's medieval circular street plan followed the line of an earlier earthen rampart and ditch (Henderikx 1993: 124). Some thirty years later, the Dutch medieval historian Johan Huizinga (Huizinga 1935) drew attention to a number of other coastal settlements in the area between the rivers Somme and the Scheldt with similar circular street patterns. Through a study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century maps, such as those of Jacob van Deventer, Huizinga identified eight sites: Bourbourg and Bergues-Saint-Winnoc in the département du Nord in northern France; Veurne in the province of West-Vlaanderen in Flanders; and Oostburg, Oost-Souburg, Middelburg, Domburg, and Burgh in Zeeland (Figure 9.1). Highlighting the recurrent place-name element *-burg* and *-bourg* (fortification) (van Werveke 1965: 5), Huizinga (Huizinga 1935) believed that their construction should be placed in the ninth or tenth centuries as *vluchtburgen* (refuges) for local popu-lations in case of Viking attack (the two remaining sites were added on the basis of perceived topographic similarities).

In the late 1930s and 1940s, Wouter C. Braat, of the National Museum for Antiquities in Leiden, embarked upon a systematic programme of archaeologi-cal investigation in order to find supporting evidence for Huizinga's (Huizinga 1935) hypothesis. Taking advantage of destruction caused during the early days of the Second World War, Braat (Braat 1941) proved the existence of circular fortresses at Middelburg and the village of Oost-Souburg, both on the island of Walcheren. After the war, Braat (Braat 1954) found evidence for a similar for-tress in the village of Burgh on the island of Schouwen-Duiveland (Figure 9.1).
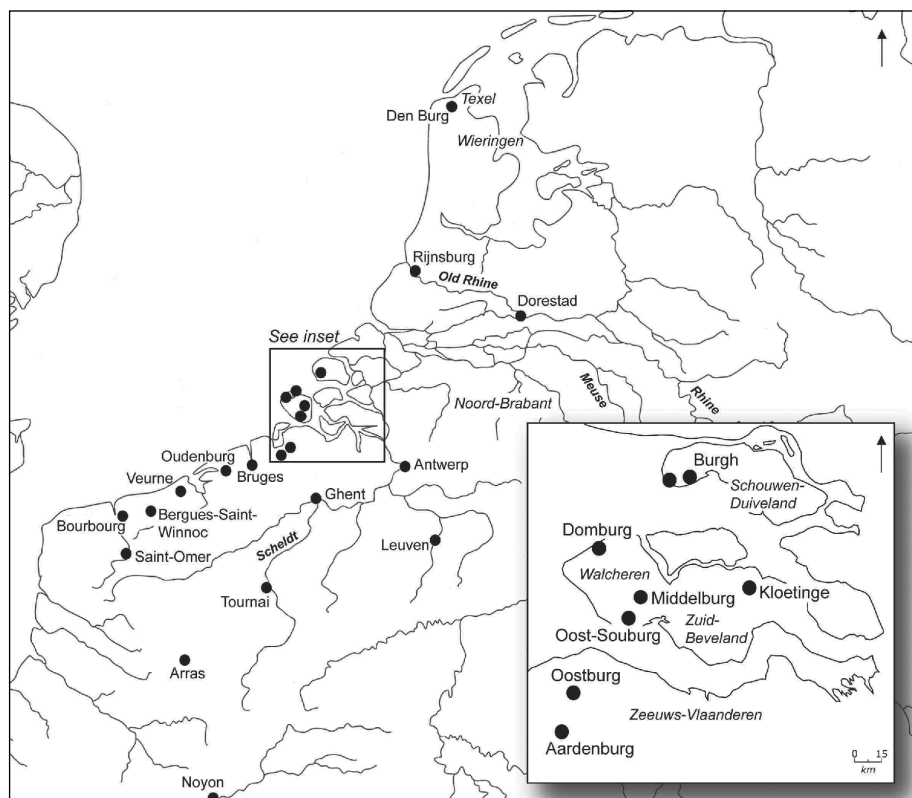
Figure 9.1. Map of the Dutch province of Zeeland indicating the sites mentioned in the text. Map data after van Dierendonck 2009: 250, fig. 1, and Henderikx 1995: 76, fig. 54. Redrawn by L. ten Harkel.

Developer-funded and rescue excavations have since continued to reveal evidence relating to the *ringwalburgen* of Middelburg, Oost-Souburg, Burgh, and also Domburg on Walcheren, whilst additional fortifications have been postulated at Kloetinge (van Heeringen 1995d: 69; but see van Dierendonck 2009: 258) and Aardenburg (van Dierendonck 2009: 266–67; van Werveke 1965), also in Zeeland.[2] Similar sites have been identified further north in the Netherlands, at Rijnsburg in the province of Zuid-Holland along the Old Rhine and Den Burg on the island of Texel, which forms part of the province of Noord-Holland (Dijkstra and de Ridder 2009) (Figure 9.1). The existence of a circular fortification at Veurne (Flanders) was confirmed through excava-

[2] The place-name Kloetinge means 'a place that is characterized by an elevation' (van Heeringen 1995d: 69).

tions by de Meulemeester (de Meulemeester 1980), who, based on Jacob van Deventer's sixteenth-century maps (de Meulemeester 1990), subsequently identified traces of another ten semicircular fortifications in the street plans of modern settlements, including: Saint-Omer in the Pas-de-Calais and Arras in the department of Savoie, both in northern France; and Tournai in the province of Hainaut, Ghent in the province of Oost-Vlaanderen, and Bruges in the province of West-Vlaanderen, all in Belgium (but see Henderikx 1995: 97). Nearby, excavations in Antwerp have also revealed evidence for an early medieval semicircular or D-shaped enclosure (Veeckman 2009).

Zeeland before the Late Ninth Century

It has long been held that prior to the ninth century, the province of Zeeland was sparsely, if at all, populated because large parts were inundated (van Heeringen 1995d: 49–50). The only archaeological evidence for occupation predating the late ninth century that had been recognized consisted of layers of dung, which contained almost no pottery or other cultural materials. Van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995d: 50) therefore suggested that the earliest occupants of Zeeland were shepherds who had no pottery at their disposal and for whose benefit the *ringwalburgen* were constructed. On the basis of finds from overlying deposits, a *terminus ante quem* for this aceramic phase of *c*. AD 900 was established (van Heeringen 1995d: 49–50). More recently, however, this view has been challenged (Loveluck and Tys 2006: 156–57). On the basis of new evidence and reassessment of existing research, Loveluck and Tys (Loveluck and Tys 2006: 147, 157) have drawn attention to evidence for more widespread and permanent settlement activity in the areas around Domburg and Oostburg as well as near Woensdrecht, just to the east of Zeeland in the province of Noord-Brabant. Traces of farmyards and other settlement remains predating the late ninth century have also been recognized on two sites on the island of Walcheren (van Dierendonck 2009: 268, 271).

Oost-Souburg

Oost-Souburg is situated on the island of Walcheren, at the junction of several tidal inversion ridges, surrounded by salt marshes and at one of the highest points in the landscape, reaching a maximum of *c*. 1.7 m above sea-level. Tidal inversion ridges, usually situated at *c*. 0.5–1.0 m above sea-level, cover *c*. 15 per cent of the island (van Heeringen 1995b: 119–20). Excavations revealed ploughing furrows underneath the rampart of Oost-Souburg. Van Heeringen
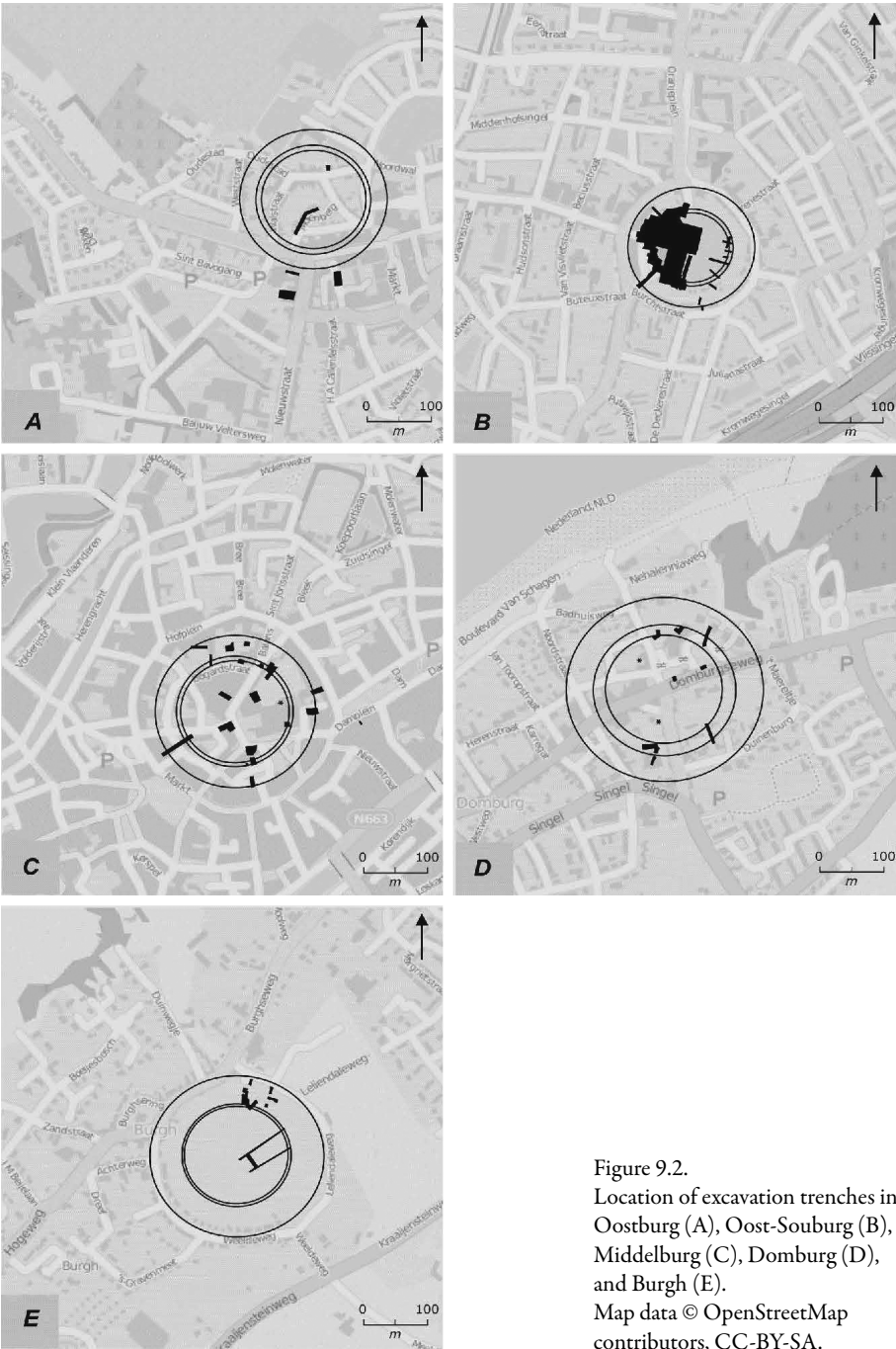
Figure 9.2.
Location of excavation trenches in Oostburg (A), Oost-Souburg (B), Middelburg (C), Domburg (D), and Burgh (E).
Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA.

(van Heeringen 1995b: 119–20; van Heeringen 1995d: 41–49; van Heeringen 1995e: 22; also see Trimpe Burger 1973: 360) suggests that such activity did not take place over a prolonged period of time; however, this view may now have to be challenged (Loveluck and Tys 2006: 156–62; also see above).

The proposed construction of a supermarket in Oost-Souburg on top of the extant earthworks of the *ringwalburg* led to large-scale rescue excavations in 1969–71 (van Heeringen 1995b: 115). The site was scheduled in 1970. In 1979, funding was obtained to reconstruct the earthworks, although this was not realized until 1994 (van Heeringen 1995b: 115–17). In the intervening years, proposed road and building works resulted in further excavation (van Heeringen 1995b: 115–16). Eventually, almost the entire western half (48 per cent) of the internal area of the *ringwalburg* and additional areas outside the rampart were investigated (van Dierendonck 2009: 250; van Heeringen 1995b: 119) (Figure 9.2).

The circular rampart, which survived to a height of 0.1–0.9 m, was built of sand and clay sods, with traces of an external post lining. It was constructed directly on top of the plough soil. It was *c.* 6 m wide and had a diameter of *c.* 132 m (van Heeringen 1995c: 21; van Heeringen 1995b: 121). The surrounding ditch was *c.* 15 m wide. This makes Oost-Souburg the smallest of the five *ringwalburgen* in Zeeland (van Heeringen 1995c: 21) (Table 9.1). The surviving section of the rampart was too low to identify multiple construction phases, but each of the excavated sections through the ditch revealed evidence for a recut (van Heeringen 1995b: 121–22). No dating material was retrieved from the rampart itself (van Heeringen 1995c: 23).

Table 9.1. Dimensions of the Zeeland ringwalburgen (in metres). After van Dierendonck 2009: 255, table 1.

	Diameter outer rampart	Width first-phase rampart	Width second-phase rampart	Width first-phase moat	Width second-phase moat
Burgh	200	4–5	—	50	—
Domburg	265	12	19	>20	—
Middelburg	220	4.5	9	>42	—
Souburg	144	6	10–11	15–20	40?
Oostburg	220	—	—	—	—

Two entranceways into the *ringwalburg* have been identified in the western and southern ramparts. Both were associated with postholes that represent the foundations of two narrow bridges over the external moat (Trimpe Burger

1973: 361). As the two entrances into Oost-Souburg are situated at right angles to each other, it is assumed that two further identical entrances were situated in the north and east ramparts, creating a cross-shaped road system that divided the internal area in four equal quadrants (van Heeringen 1995b: 123). Carbon-14 dating of a single sample of surviving wood from one of the bridges resulted in a date range of AD 889–98 or AD 910–64 (at the 95 per cent probability rate) (van Heeringen 1995c: 23, 36–39).[3] Traces of wooden drainage or sewage pipes underneath the pathways and bridges were also identified (Trimpe Burger 1973: 362). At some later point, the bridges were replaced with dams, and the internal pathways went out of use (van Heeringen 1995b: 125). Van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995b: 126–27) suggests that these changes indicate a decrease in the site's importance as a *vluchtburg*.

The internal area measures 13,690 m². At least twenty-one houses were identified, as well as a large number of postholes that could not be associated with individual structures (van Heeringen 1995b: 127). The houses were built on individual raised platforms and were oriented towards the streets (Trimpe Burger 1973: 363; van Heeringen 1995c: 23). The occupation of the site can be divided into two phases. In both phases the houses were built with a combination of clay sods, timber, and wattle-and-daub (Trimpe Burger 1973: 363), but those belonging to the second phase (houses 17–21) showed a much greater uniformity in construction methods (van Heeringen 1995b: 127–28). The first phase (houses 1–16) was a period of intensive building activity (van Heeringen 1995b: 128). A variety of house types have been recognized for this phase, which led van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995b: 128) to speculate that the occupation of Oost-Souburg was the result of organic growth rather than organized planning, partially hindered by the wet nature of the soil and an absence of suitable wood for post constructions.

Three house types (1–3) have been identified for phase 1. It is beyond the scope of this essay to go into the detail of their construction method (see van Heeringen 1995b: 127–41), but a few observations are worth making. In one of the houses of type 1, built without identifiable foundations, a significant amount of ironworking slag was found near the fireplace, suggesting these houses may have had industrial purposes (van Heeringen 1995b: 133). Analysis of the chemical composition of three objects — a thin iron rod, a lump of iron, and a knife fragment — revealed that they were made of bog ore. However, only

---

[3] The variation in carbon-14 dates is caused by a 'wiggle' in the natural carbon-14 content in the atmosphere in the period 1110 to 1140 BP (van Heeringen 1995c: 37).

the ore for the lump was possibly of Dutch provenance, from the nearby province of Noord-Brabant; the knife and rod contained too much phosphor and manganese to correspond to any known ores from the Netherlands (Joosten 1995: 177–78).

Houses of type 2 and 3 had post-built frames, with hearths placed against the long walls. Houses of type 2 were typically long and narrow, with no internal divisions, and were interpreted as dwellings (van Heeringen 1995b: 133–34). Houses of type 3 were shorter and broader, measuring roughly 15 × 7 m. Some of them contained pits with black, humic fills (van Heeringen 1995b: 135). They were not subjected to further analysis, but, on the basis of similar evidence from Spijkenisse on the island of Putten, just to the north of Zeeland in the Dutch province of Zuid-Holland (the Netherlands), the pits were interpreted as potential manure pits, suggesting that these houses may have been used as barns (van Heeringen 1995b: 140).

Houses of type 4 (five in total) belonged to phase 2. They were larger than preceding structures and typically lack hearths and manure pits, leading to the suggestion that they functioned as sheds (van Heeringen 1995b: 137–39). They have been interpreted in the context of the above-mentioned change in character of Oost-Souburg, when the bridges and the pathways went out of use, which supposedly took place at some point after *c.* AD 1000 (van Heeringen 1995b: 128; van Heeringen 1995c: 23).

Five additional carbon-14 dates were obtained from the first occupation phase of Oost-Souburg. A dog skeleton from the initial building platforms, tentatively identified as a foundation deposit, was dated to AD 884–990. A second sample, consisting of animal bones associated with the slag from one of the type 1 houses, was dated to AD 784–881. A third animal bone sample was associated with the east-west road, and was dated to AD 790–808, AD 810–893 or AD 917–955. A fourth animal bone sample came from a small ditch associated with one of the phase 1 houses, and was dated to AD 892–921 or AD 942–1006. The final sample was retrieved from one of the pits with humic fills, and provided a date range of AD 891–927 or AD 930–981 (all the above dates at the probability rate of 95 per cent) (van Heeringen 1995b: 143; van Heeringen 1995c: 38).

The pottery from Oost-Souburg belongs to the late ninth and tenth centuries. Eight main pottery types have been recognized. The most common ware is Pingsdorf ware (*c.* 51 per cent of the assemblage), the percentage of which seems to increase over time (van Heeringen and Verhaeghe 1995: 145). The majority of the Pingsdorf ware pottery is wheel-thrown and hard fired, and lacks certain decorative characteristics that were common in the eleventh and twelfth cen-

turies, suggesting the assemblage from Oost-Souburg belongs relatively early in the production history of this ware. Van Heeringen and Verhaeghe (van Heeringen and Verhaeghe 1995: 145–46) believe that it was imported from the Rhineland in modern Germany.

The other wares include *Kugeltopf* ware, Andenne-type ware, *Relief-bandamphorae*, Paffrath ware, a (probably) locally produced red-fired ware, Hunneschans ware, and Badorf ware (van Heeringen and Verhaeghe 1995: 145), whilst more recently the so-called Duisburg ware has also been recognized (van Dierendonck 2009: 263). *Kugeltopf* ware is coarse black ware. The vessels from Oost-Souburg are mostly handmade, and finished on a slow wheel before being fired at temperatures in excess of 1000 ºC. Their production centre has not been identified (van Heeringen and Verhaeghe 1995: 148–53). The wheel-thrown Andenne-type ware, characterized by a white fabric and a yellow green glaze, represents less than 10 per cent of the entire pottery assemblage. It was produced in the Meuse valley and northern France and found a widespread distribution across north-western Europe as a luxury ware, especially in the eleventh century, which makes the assemblage from Oost-Souburg unusually early (van Heeringen and Verhaeghe 1995: 153). The vessels found at Oost-Souburg probably originated in the Meuse valley (Verhaeghe 1995: 169). With exception of the red-fired ware, which seems to be a local imitation of Rhineland pottery, the remaining pottery types all originated in the German Rhineland (van Heeringen and Verhaeghe 1995: 153–55).

The majority of pottery from Oost-Souburg was imported, as were other artefacts, suggesting that this *ringwalburg* was tied into a wide-ranging network of long-distance contacts. The most numerous of other imported objects are those made of natural stone. A single fragment of a soapstone vessel — possibly of southwest Swedish origin — was found in Oost-Souburg (Kars 1995: 191). In addition, a large quantity of quern or millstones and whetstones were found. The quern stones were all made of tephrite from Mayen in the Eiffel region (Germany), which is the most common source for quern stones in western Europe during the early medieval period (Kars 1995: 185–86). The whetstones were made of a variety of materials. About 20 per cent were made of local stone, but the majority was made of sandstone imported from the Eiffel region or quartz phyllite imported from the Telemarken area in Norway (Kars 1995: 188–90).

Imported whetstones are relatively uncommon in contemporary contexts in Dorestad, and as the Norwegian phyllite was far superior to the local stone, Kars (Kars 1995: 191) has suggested that the inhabitants of Oost-Souburg had a use for whetstones on more than just a domestic scale. The number of whetstones

was furthermore significantly larger than the number of quern stones, which is — again — unusual in contemporary contexts in the Low Countries (Kars 1995: 90–91). A total of nineteen well-used iron knives were also found in Oost-Souburg. Van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995a: 171) suggests that they were locally produced, even though chemical analysis of the above-mentioned knife fragment did not necessarily support this view (Joosten 1995: 178).

The ironwork from Oost-Souburg deserves further comment. In addition to the above-mentioned knives, the assemblage includes: one sword blade; three spearheads; two arrow-heads (or points belonging to other types of weapons — the preservation of ironwork was poor); one axe; three spurs; one fragment of a bridle bit; three buckle fragments; two hooks, possibly boat hooks; two keys; one spade or shovel; twelve nails; four hinges; and fifty-five other, mostly uni-dentified, objects (van Heeringen 1995a: 172). On the whole, the assemblage is not dissimilar to that from Viking Age York (see Ottaway 1992). The pieces of equestrian equipment are typologically dated to the period between the Carolingian period and eleventh to twelfth centuries (van Heeringen 1995a: 171), and are of types common across northern Europe, also occurring, for example, at York (Ottaway 1992: 698–709).

In his analysis, van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995a: 171; also see van Heeringen 1995d: 55) states that the low quantity of weapons amongst the metal objects suggests that the settlement had a civilian character. By compari-son, the Viking Age layers of York in England, not commonly regarded as a mil-itary foundation either, produced at least twenty-five arrow-heads, at least one spearhead, and nine sword fragments (Ottaway 1992), whilst the metalwork from the tenth- and eleventh-century Danish Trelleborg-type fortress of Fyrkat included only one spear point and two arrow-heads (Dobat 2009: 61) (see below). But can the amount of weapon fragments retrieved from a settlement shed light on the (military) character of that settlement, or is the occurrence of such fragments more likely to indicate the presence of a blacksmith? The six or seven weapon fragments from Oost-Souburg constitute a substantially higher amount than the average West-Saxon burh has produced in its Viking Age phases (Reynolds, personal communication), where iron working on the whole does not seem to have taken place until the second half of the tenth cen-tury (Vince 1994: 114).

Other metal objects include nineteen made of copper alloy and four made of lead. The copper-alloy objects include one extremely worn coin that can no longer be identified, as well as a thimble, a needle, two fragments of chain, and a small assemblage of jewellery characterized as being of extremely poor quality (van Heeringen 1995a: 172). It consists of two ansate brooches of eighth- to

tenth-century date and eight flat disc brooches. Two of the disc brooches are nummular and loosely based on *solidi* of Louis the Pious, and belong to a type that occurs mostly in the Frisian coastal zone (van Heeringen 1995a: 172–73). The remainder include two brooches with equal-armed cross design of a type that continued into the eleventh century, and a brooch with simple decoration consisting of seven impressed dots loosely arranged in a circle around a central dot (van Heeringen 1995a: 173). Finally, the lead objects included two small conical weights and two rough lead discs with central perforation that van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995a: 173) regarded as unidentified but which bear similarities to lead disc weights from Lincoln (Colyer, Gilmour, and Jones 1999: 158; ten Harkel 2010: 214–16, fig. 36). The Viking Age assemblage from Lincoln also included lead conical weights of the type that occurred in Oost-Souburg (ten Harkel 2010: fig. 36; van Heeringen 1995a: 183, fig. 124).

Oost-Souburg has also yielded a significant assemblage of animal bone. The two most common species were sheep or goat and cow, which together represent over 90 per cent of the assemblage (Lauwerier 1995: 214).[4] Pig bones made up most of the rest of the assemblage. Horse (mostly worked radii and metapodials), dog, cat, red deer (only antler), chicken, grey or domestic goose, and whale also occurred. Lauwerier interprets the three whalebone fragments as incidental beach finds. An unspecified amount of marine shells was also recorded. Analysis of the cow bones has revealed that most animals were slaughtered at a young age, just after they were fully grown, suggesting that Oost-Souburg's inhabitants did not use them as traction animals (Lauwerier 1995: 215). Sheep, on the other hand, were kept for much longer, often more than six years, suggesting that they were kept primarily for their wool (although a limited number of lambs were slaughtered at a younger age) (Lauwerier 1995: 216).

There is ample evidence for bone working, both in the form of (part-)finished objects and bone working waste (Lauwerier and van Heeringen 1995; Lauwerier and van Klaveren 1995: 193). Composite and handled combs, each with unique decoration, make up a significant part of the assemblage, whilst comb-manufacturing waste has also been found (Lauwerier and van Heeringen 1995; Lauwerier and van Klaveren 1995: 193–96). Lauwerier and van Klaveren (Lauwerier and van Klaveren 1995: 197) take the variability of the decoration to mean that comb-making was not a specialized craft, but was undertaken by a variety of individuals; alternatively, combs may have been imported. The handled combs, for example, may have originated in England (Lauwerier and van

---

[4] Unfortunately the soils were not sieved for smaller bones, which led to a bias towards larger species at the expense of fish and bird bones (Lauwerier 1995: 213).

Klaveren 1995; Riddler 1990). Most of the combs were made of red deer antler, which must have been imported, as no other parts of the animal were found, and the species was not native to the Zeeland salt marshes (Lauwerier and van Klaveren 1995: 196–97).

Another common object type is bone ice skates and gliders for sledges, manufactured from the radii and metapodials of horse and cattle (Lauwerier 1995: 214; Lauwerier and van Klaveren 1995: 200–03). As (again) no other horse bones occurred in the settlement (see above), it is likely that the metapodials were imported specifically in order to manufacture ice skates. A number of hollow bone points have also been found, which were presumably fitted onto the end of sticks, to be used for propulsion forward on a sledge or on skates (Lauwerier and van Klaveren 1995: 203). Finally, ten antler spindle whorls have also been found, as well as thirteen bone needles and pin-beaters (Lauwerier and van Klaveren 1995: 199), and a number of bone 'tridents' whose use is still unknown, but which represent an increasingly common find from contemporary sites in the region, and may be related to textile production (Lauwerier and van Klaveren 1995: 199–200, 206–12; Veeckman 2009: 281, fig. 8).

After the first occupation phase came to an end in *c.* AD 1000, Oost-Souburg was never reoccupied on any considerable scale (van Heeringen 1995c: 23). After the twelfth century, the large 'sheds' of phase 2 disappeared, and the *ringwalburg* remained empty (van Heeringen 1995c: 23). In the eleventh century a village developed next to the old *ringwalburg*, which still exists today (van Heeringen 1995c: 15; Lauwerier and van Heeringen 1995: 73).

Middelburg

Middelburg, also situated on an inverted tidal ridge on the island of Walcheren, 4.1 km north of Oost-Souburg, is now the provincial capital of Zeeland. Investigations have been more limited than those at Oost-Souburg (Figure 9.2). As stated previously, the site was first investigated in the 1940s and again in the 1960s. Various trenches were dug through the rampart and ditch and in the centre of the *ringwalburg* (van Heeringen 1995c: 22–24). Since then, ten additional excavations, which took place in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, have revealed additional keyhole glimpses of the early medieval phase of this *ringwalburg* (van Heeringen 1995c: 22–24; van Dierendonck 2009: 259–62).

No evidence for activity predating the late ninth or tenth centuries has been recognized (van Dierendonck 2009: 259–62). Environmental and pollen analysis of the buried soils underneath the rampart and from deposits associated with both phases of the rampart itself revealed a decrease in tree pollen
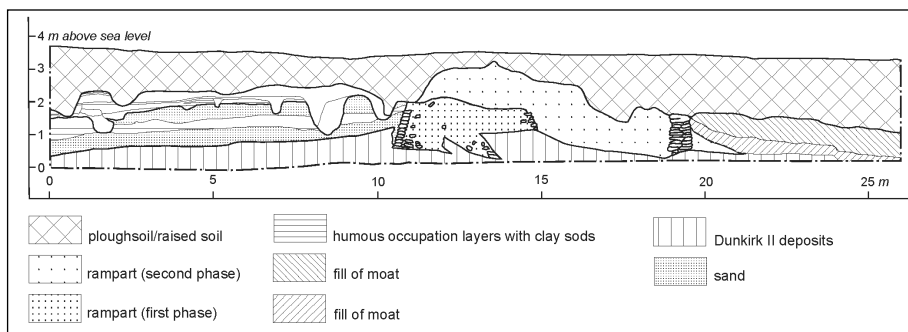
Figure 9.3. South-east facing section through the rampart and ditch of Middelburg. Redrawn after van Heeringen 1995c: 24, fig. 12 and van Dierendonck 2009: 256, fig. 4. Redrawn by L. ten Harkel.

contemporary with the rampart, suggesting that local timber was used for its construction (van Dierendonck 2009: 261). An increase in herb pollen suggests that the area was gradually turned into pastureland for cattle and/or sheep. In all phases, evidence for human activity was low. Van Dierendonck (van Dierendonck 2009: 261) believes that the area was not widely used for settlement, confirming — in his view — the interpretation of Middelburg as a *vluchtburg*.

The rampart had a diameter of *c.* 220 m (van Heeringen 1995c: 24) (Table 9.1). The only section of the ditch that was fully excavated, in the south-west corner of the settlement, measured 42 m in width (van Heeringen 1995c: 24). It incorporated an existing bend in a natural tidal waterway — the Arne — into its northern defences (van Dierendonck 2009: 259; van Heeringen 1995c: 24).[5] The buried soil underlying the northern rampart existed at no more than 0.5 m above sea-level and was noticeably soft and very clayey. This may have caused the first phase of the rampart — originally thought to be 4.5 m wide, although recent excavations have suggested it measured 7.5 m in places — to subside, after which it was widened to *c.* 10 m (van Dierendonck 2009: 260). It has been suggested that this widening coincided with the artificial raising of the internal area to *c.* 2 m above sea-level with 'clean' sand (van Heeringen 1995c: 24–26). However, a published section drawing (van Heeringen 1995c: 24, fig. 12) reveals that this layer butted up against the first rather than the second

[5] Just to the east of the postulated line of the ditch exists a square with the place-name *Dam* (dam), suggesting that the Arne may have been dammed off at this point at some stage in the past; however, analysis of deposits from tenth-century drains suggested that the settlement was still in open connection with the sea at the end of the first millennium AD (van Heeringen, Henderikx, and Mars 1995: 24).

phase of the rampart (Figure 9.3). A posthole on top of the rampart has been interpreted as evidence for a wooden palisade (van Heeringen 1992a: 125–26). The finds are similar to those from Oost-Souburg, although van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995c: 27) has commented on an unusually high number of large fragments of tephrite millstones.

Recent investigations unearthed traces of potential tenth-century settlement inside the *ringwalburg*, but these were preserved *in situ* (van Dierendonck 2009: 260). Previously, excavations in 1961 revealed the waterlogged remnants of a rectangular building with wattle walls at 2.4 m above sea-level, suggesting that the internal area of the *ringwalburg* had been heightened significantly to deal with the high water table (van Heeringen 1995c: 27).[6] This was confirmed in 1993, when excavations revealed a road surface, also at *c*. 2.4 m above sea-level, constructed of oak planks on a supporting framework of alder and ash posts and possible remains of an earlier pathway underneath. Underneath the road surface, at *c*. 1.2 m above sea-level, remnants of a hollow tree trunk that functioned as a drainage pipe were discovered, similar to the less well-preserved drainage system from Oost-Souburg (see above) (van Heeringen 1995c: 25). Several timbers associated with different phases of the Middelburg pathway and the underlying gutter were radiocarbon dated. The results for the five samples were as follows: 891–922 or 938–82; 881–93 or 918–54; 882–94 or 915–57; 883–94 or 917–56; and 887–99 or 908–66 (all at the 95 per cent probability rate) (van Heeringen 1995c: 25, 38) (see above, n. 3), rendering it difficult to establish an absolute chronology. Nevertheless, van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995c: 25–27) argues that the samples represent different stages in an ongoing process of construction and consolidation whereby the construction of the earthworks, the first occupation phase, and the drainage system all date to the 880s, suggesting occupation of the *ringwalburg* took place not long after the construction of the rampart, and the final road surface, at 2.4 m above sea-level, dates to the 950s.

Middelburg is the only *ringwalburg* that developed into a town of considerable importance, whose streets arguably still reflect the 'typical' cross-shaped plan of the *ringwalburgen* (van Heeringen 1995c: 28; but see below). In the second half of the tenth century, the area within the walls became too small for its rapidly growing population (van Heeringen 1989: 142) and by the eleventh century Middelburg was a regional ecclesiastical and administrative centre (Lauwerier and van Heeringen 1995: 73).

---

[6] Unfortunately, many of the archives of the earlier excavations in Middelburg have not survived (van Heeringen 1995c: 27).

Domburg

Excavations at Domburg, also situated on Walcheren, took place in the 1980s and 1990s and consisted of a series of seven trenches (van Heeringen, Henderikx, and Mars 1995: 28–29), later followed by further excavations in the 2000s (Figure 9.2). Domburg is the largest of the five fortresses in Zeeland and has a postulated diameter of 265 m (van Heeringen 1992b: 58) (Table 9.1). It is constructed on the internal edge of the sand dunes — the place-name means 'dune fortress' — between 0.5 m and 1.25 m above sea-level, on the island's north-western coast (van Heeringen 1995c: 28–29). Excavations at Domburg in the 1990s revealed a number of ploughing furrows and one wooden post — dendrochronologically dated to the first half of the eighth century — directly underneath the rampart (van Heeringen 1995c: 31).

The rampart consists of sand with a revetment of regularly stacked clay sods. At least two construction phases could be identified (van Heeringen 1995c: 30–31). The first phase was *c.* 12 m wide. Excavations in the 2000s revealed that the second phase rampart exceeded 20 m (van Dierendonck 2009: 263). Near the north-eastern part of the *ringwalburg*, possible remnants of a picket fence were identified and subjected to radiocarbon dating. The samples provided date ranges of AD 782–829 or AD 831–74; AD 888–97 or AD 910–64; and AD 827–83 or AD 873–90 (all at the 95 per cent probability rate) (van Heeringen 1995c: 28, 31, 38). Although no full section across the surrounding ditch was excavated, it has been postulated that it was at least 20 m in width (van Heeringen 1995c: 29). The current street plan still reveals the cross-shaped pattern that van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995c: 28) considers typical for the *ringwalburgen*.

Domburg was situated in the vicinity of a pre-existing trading settlement — sometimes referred to as *Walichrum*, *c.* 2 km to the north-east — mostly known from beach finds (Henderikx 1995: 77; van Heeringen 1995d: 43). Seventeenth-century references relate the discovery of a submerged early medieval settlement and two early medieval cemeteries to the north and north-west of Domburg, which were exposed during a storm; part of the same remains reappeared in the nineteenth century but were never thoroughly investigated (van Heeringen 1995d: 42–43). It has been suggested that some of the finds — a necklace of Scandinavian manufacture and a silver toilet set with parallels in Scandinavia — are indicative of a Viking presence in Domburg, but van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995d: 44) points out that the toilet set may have been locally produced, and he prefers to view the finds as evidence that the settlement had wide-ranging contacts.

The coin evidence suggests a period of prosperity in the later seventh and eighth centuries (van Heeringen 1995d: 43). Table 9.2 shows the temporal distribution of the coins according to production date. The decline after AD 840 is difficult to explain from a numismatic perspective, and Pol (Pol 1995: 48) has suggested that this is related to the destruction of the trading settlement in AD 837 (the historical source material records Viking raids on Walcheren in AD 837; see below). The absence of coins in the tenth century corresponds to a general decline in coin finds across the Netherlands (Pol 1995: 48).

Table 9.2. Coin finds from Domburg (by production date). After Pol 1995: 48, table 3.

Period of coin production	Number of years	Number of coins found in Domburg
793–814	26	10
814–840	25	77
840–875	35	35
875–900	25	0

Initially it was believed — on the basis of the absence of the ninth-century Badorf and Hunneschans wares, traces of occupation overlying the rampart and the deposition of a layer of 'clean' sand inside the rampart — that the *ringwalburg* stood empty for some time following its construction (van Heeringen 1995c: 32, 36). However, the presence of occupation layers on top of the rampart merely suggests that at some point settlement was not confined to the enclosed area. The layer of 'clean' sand, similar to those encountered in Oost-Souburg, Middelburg (see above) and Domburg, is elsewhere interpreted as a measure to raise the ground level to avoid flooding (van Heeringen 1992a: 126–27), and it is unclear why its deposit could not have been a direct preparation for the first occupation phase whilst also being near-contemporary with the construction of the first phase of the rampart.

Excavations in 2001 eventually revealed a post-built house with wattle-and-daub walls stratigraphically underneath the second phase rampart, confirming that occupation during the first phase did occur (van Dierendonck 2009: 264). The house was partially destroyed to make room for the widening of the defences, but in the surviving section the floor levels were preserved, which existed at 0.15 m above the exterior surface. Near the entrance, the interior was paved with fragments of large tephrite querns, loam, and straw, and the exterior with wooden planks (van Dierendonck 2009: 263). Typologically, the house was similar to Oost-Souburg types 2 and 3 (phase 1). The associated pottery assemblage included Duisburg ware, Hunneschans ware, *Kugeltopf* ware, and

other Flemish wares, suggesting a date in the first quarter of the tenth century (van Dierendonck 2009: 263). Animal bones were mostly from sheep or goats, confirming the suggestion that the surrounding area was used for pasture (van Dierendonck 2009: 264).

One aspect of the archaeology of Domburg deserves special mention. During excavations at the Badhotel site in 1991, in the north-east of the settlement, a female skeleton was found, buried directly underneath the rampart (van Heeringen 1993: 194). No sign of a coffin was found. The bones were radiocarbon dated to the late eighth century (van Heeringen 1993: 194). However, van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995c: 31) suggests that the results may have been some eighty years 'too old' due to the marine reservoir-effect (irregular readings caused by variations in the carbon exchange reservoir), in which case the burial could be contemporary with the construction of the rampart. This was certainly the case for another female burial that was found in the Schuitvlotstraat in the south of the settlement in 1992, also directly underneath the rampart. This time the woman, aged about forty, was buried in a supine and extended position in a coffin made of reused ship's timber that was dated dendrochronologically to AD 825. Consequently, a date in the second half of the ninth century was suggested for the burial (van Heeringen 1993: 194; van Heeringen 1995c: 31). During excavations in 2001, in the vicinity of the Schuitvlotstraat, a third burial was found inside the *ringwalburg*, underneath layers associated with the first construction phase. The body of a three- to four-year-old child was radiocarbon dated to the eighth century, although it was acknowledged that the dating of this skeleton, too, could have suffered from the aforementioned reservoir effect (van Dierendonck 2009: 262–63). It has been suggested that the burials were foundation deposits or 'fake sacrifices' (van Heeringen 1995c: 28).

Towards the end of the tenth century, Domburg disappeared under a thick layer of dune sand (van Heeringen 1995c: 15). In the eleventh century, a new village developed partly on top of and outside the old rampart (van Heeringen 1995c: 31). In some places the defences seem to have been deliberately destroyed, with occupation layers containing eleventh- and twelfth-century pottery overlying the remains of the rampart (van Heeringen 1994: 233–34). Nowadays Domburg is a medium-sized village with approximately five thousand inhabitants.

Burgh

Burgh is the only one of the *ringwalburgen* located on the island of Schouwen-Duiveland. Like Domburg, it is situated on the internal dune edge, at roughly

0.6 m above sea-level (van Heeringen 1995c: 33–34). It was located in the vicinity of the *emporium* Westerschouwen, the presence of which is archaeologically attested only by metalwork finds and coins of eighth- and earlier ninth-century date (Clarke and Ambrosiani 1991: 29; Henderikx 1995: 77; van Dierendonck 2009: 267). More recently, ninth-century pottery was found on two eleventh- to twelfth-century *motte* sites in the east of the island, suggesting that occupation on *terpen* (dwelling mounds) occurred during the ninth century (van Dierendonck 2009: 268).

The earthworks of Burgh are very well preserved, and excavations took place in the 1950s, 1970s, and 1980s. The results are similar to those from Oost-Souburg. The rampart, consisting of a sand core lined with clay sods, was *c.* 4–5 m wide and had a diameter of 200 m (van Heeringen 1995c: 34). The ditch measured some 50 m across in the north-eastern part of the earthworks (van Heeringen 1995c: 33–34). At least a segment of the rampart was fortified with a palisade of wooden posts placed in square postholes at regular intervals of *c.* 0.5 m (van Heeringen 1995c: 33–35). Two of the posts were radiocarbon dated, but the results — AD 794–800, AD 816–44 or AD 854–980 and AD 792–802, AD 814–46 or AD 852–976 respectively — were inconclusive (van Heeringen 1995c: 35, 38). Inside the area, a sequence of occupation layers could be identified (van Heeringen 1995c: 33). The modern-day north-west/south-east path that runs across the middle of the enclosed area found its origins in the tenth century. No evidence was found, however, for a path at right angles to the first one (van Heeringen 1995c: 35).

The pottery was similar to that from Oost-Souburg, although Burgh yielded proportionally more Badorf ware, the production of which ceases towards the end of the ninth century, and Hunneschans ware, produced from around AD 900 (van Heeringen 1995c: 36). This suggests that occupation in Burgh predated that in Oost-Souburg and was possibly contemporary with the construction of the rampart. However, on the basis of a layer of clean sand that was found at the bottom of the occupation sequence in the internal area, similar to those identified in Oost-Souburg, Middelburg, and Domburg, van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995c: 36) still prefers a gap between initial construction and subsequent occupation of roughly one generation. Other finds include iron tools, hone stones, bone skates, and butchery waste similar to the larger quantities of material retrieved from Oost-Souberg.

Burgh was deserted by *c.* AD 1000 (van Heeringen 1995c: 36). In the eleventh century, a village developed next to the old fortified area (van Heeringen 1995c: 15). Burgh is still a small village today.

Oostburg

Although the originally circular street plan of Oostburg, on the mainland of Zeeuws Vlaanderen, along with its toponym *-burg*, are reminiscent of the characteristics of other *ringwalburgen*, no evidence for tenth-century occupation has yet been found in the settlement. In each case, excavations only found seventeenth-century layers. The only evidence for the early medieval period consists of a single sherd of *Reliefbandamphor* and a few sherds of Pingsdorf ware (van Heeringen 1995c: 17, 20). Consequently, the identification of this site as a tenth-century *ringwalburg* rests entirely on historic cartographic material (in particular Jacob van Deventer's map of 1550 and Jacob Mogge's map of 1660) and ongoing analysis of the modern street plan (van Dierendonck 2009: 266; van Heeringen 1995c: 17–20).

Other Possible *ringwalburgen*

As mentioned previously, *ringwalburgen* have also been postulated at Kloetinge and Aardenburg. Based on the circular shape of a cluster of fields to the north-east of the village of Kloetinge on the island of Zuid-Beveland, van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995d: 69) tentatively identified another *ringwalburg*. However, van Dierendonck (van Dierendonck 2009: 258) has drawn attention to the absence of the suffix *-burg*, and has pointed out that the typical alignment of the field boundaries in the cluster to the north-east of the settlement may be twelfth-century in origin. Archaeological investigations in 1996 revealed no evidence for the existence of a fortress, nor any pottery that predated the twelfth century (van Dierendonck 2009: 258).

The suffix *-burg* in the name Aardenburg, located on the Dutch-Belgian border seven kilometres southwest of Oostburg, probably refers to the remnants of a second-century Roman fort in this location (van Dierendonck 2009: 252; Trimpe Burger 1985: 344). Settlement traces of seventh-century date have also been recognized (Henderikx 1995: 77). The first recorded occurrence of the suffix *-burg*, however, is dated to AD 966, and finds of ninth- and tenth-century date have been retrieved from the area inside the defensive circuit. Drawing attention to the frequent reuse of Roman settlements in England, van Dierendonck (van Dierendonck 2009: 266–67) has therefore suggested that the settlement's role as a defensive site during the period of Viking attacks should be considered. According to Henderikx (Henderikx 1995: 101), the refurbishment of old Roman fortifications — rather than the construction of new ones — was more common to the Carolingian rulers as well.

Huizinga's (Huizinga 1935) list of sites also included Veurne, Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, and Bourbourg. As stated above, the existence of the circular fortification at Veurne in Flanders was confirmed through excavations by the late de Meulemeester (de Meulemeester 1980), which revealed evidence for an early medieval moat and several contemporary house structures. No excavations have been carried out in Bergues — nor, to the author's knowledge, in Bourbourg — that can support its interpretation as a *ringwalburg* (Veeckman 2009: 279). However, the sixteenth-century map of Jacob van Deventer records a church at the centre of the circular street pattern of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, which, together with the saintly reference in the place-name, suggests that the enclosure was related to an ecclesiastical foundation.

De Meulenmeester's (de Meulemeester 1990) other postulated semicircular enclosures include Saint-Omer, situated not far from Bourbourg. The *Miracles of St Bertin* record a Viking attack on Saint-Omer (Henderikx 1995: 91), and van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995d: 52) believes that the circular street plan in its centre was originally a *ringwalburg*. However, a manuscript illumination from the twelfth-century *Liber Floridus* (included in van Heeringen, Henderikx, and Mars 1995: 95, as fig. 59), written by Lambert of Saint-Omer, portrays the settlement as having no less than nine crosses on the top of nine turret-like structures, suggesting that the settlement was ecclesiastical rather than secular.

Excavations in Ghent, which served as a Viking winter camp in AD 879–80 (Veeckman 2009: 276), have revealed that a ninth-century enclosure forms the basis of the city's semi-circular street plan (de Meulemeester 1990: 134–36; van Dierendonck 2009: 280). Excavations in Antwerp have also revealed evidence for an early medieval semicircular or D-shaped enclosure of mid-ninth-century origin, incorporating the river Scheldt. The finds assemblage from Antwerp is similar to that of Oost-Souburg (Veeckman 2009: 277–79). Excavations in Bruges in the 1980s furthermore revealed a curving ditch and rampart of ninth-to tenth-century date that butt-ended against two natural waterways, creating a semi-circular enclosure (Veeckman 2009: 280). It must be stated, however, that the opinion differs on what constitutes semicircular: Bartels and Vermeulen (Bartels and Vermeulen 2009: 245) consider the same enclosure to be square.

Further north in Frisia, investigations at Rijnsburg have revealed a semicircular *ringwalburg* with a radial street pattern. Its internal layout thus differs from that of the *ringwalburgen* in Zeeland, which is interpreted as regional variation in the construction of *vluchtburgen* (Dijkstra and de Ridder 2009: 203). Dijkstra and de Ridder (Dijkstra and de Ridder 2009: 209–10) tentatively attribute its construction to the ninth or tenth century, but point out

that more excavation is needed to narrow down its construction date and the dates for occupation inside the fortress. Finally, investigations in the postulated *ringwalburg* at Den Burg have revealed that its construction may have predated the Viking period, and possibly occurred in the context of late seventh-/eighth-century power struggles between the Pippinids and a local Frisian warlord, although Dijkstra and de Ridder (Dijkstra and de Ridder 2009: 203–04) point out that the ceramic evidence is not dated securely enough to exclude a date in the later eighth or ninth centuries.

Interpretations of the ringwalburgen

An Extensive Chain of Defences?

The ninth century was a period of social unrest (van Heeringen 1995d: 44). However, the historical evidence that is used to argue that the *ringwalburgen* in Zeeland were part of a defensive system is somewhat thin. A passage in the *Miracles of St Bertin* (chap. 6) refers to 'recently built fortifications' (*castella recens facta*) that the Vikings were said to have planned to attack in AD 891 on way to Lotharingia from Noyon (van Werveke 1965) (Figure 9.1). The *Miracles* record attacks on Saint-Omer and Kassel before the Vikings depart for Leuven (Henderikx 1995: 91); however, van Werveke (van Werveke 1965: 5–7), following Huizinga (Huizinga 1935), interpreted the phrase as evidence that the Zeeland *ringwalburgen* were part of a chain of defensive sites constructed in the 880s. To 'fill' the gap that Huizinga's (Huizinga 1935) list of eight sites left between Veurne and Oostburg, he added the old Roman *castella* of Oudenburg and Aardenburg as well as Bruges. As discussed previously, the originally Roman site of Aardenburg may indeed have been used in a defensive capacity; however, ninth-century Oudenburg was used for cattle pasture before its stone was quarried for the construction of the castle in Bruges (Verhulst 1999: 17, 191). The idea that the *ringwalburgen* could be identified with the *castella recens facta* has since been discredited, as the four northern sites of Oost-Souburg, Middelburg, Domburg, and Burgh were all located in, and not on the way to, Lotharingia (van Heeringen 1998: 245).

In the 1970s, Blok (Blok 1979: 130–31), arguing that fortification building in the early Carolingian period was a royal prerogative, pointed out that Huizinga's (Huizinga 1935) southernmost three *ringwalburgen* — Bourbourg, Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, and Veurne — belonged to the territory of a different ruler from the northern group and could not have formed part of the same defensive network. To avoid changing the general interpretative framework,

Sawyer (Sawyer 1982: 82) therefore attributed the sites to Louis the Pious's reign (AD 814–40), prior to the division of the Frankish Empire. The *Annals of St Bertin* (years 834, 836, 837) report that in the 830s, Frisia (including in AD 837 the island of Walcheren) was subjected to extensive Viking raids. Following another attack on Dorestad in AD 835, Louis became 'very angry and made arrangements for the effective defence of the coast' (*Annals of St Bertin*, years 835, 836), which Sawyer (Sawyer 1982: 81–82) interpreted as the construction of a chain of defensive sites. The *Annals of St Bertin* (year 837) relate how Louis the Pious lodged an inquiry into the question of why his coastal defence system had failed, and concluded that the problem lay with the disobedience of the Frisians. As has been discussed above, however, archaeological investigations have firmly placed the construction of the *ringwalburgen* of Oost-Souburg, Middelburg, Domburg, and Burgh after the middle of the ninth century.

A Local Defensive Landscape?

Recent interpretations have taken a more local viewpoint to the rationale behind the construction of the various circular and semicircular fortifications. In their study of the more northerly sites, Dijkstra and de Ridder (Dijkstra and de Ridder 2009: 215) conclude that not all forts were built as part of the same defensive system, but that they date from different periods and were built for different specific needs. In the case of the *ringwalburgen* from Zeeland, the place-name evidence supports this. The southern Oostburg (east fortress) lies to the south of the other *ringwalburgen* in Zeeland, and van Dierendonck (van Dierendonck 2009: 254) points out that it must, therefore, have belonged to a different group of defences than the other four sites (Figure 9.1). This makes sense in the context of ninth- and tenth-century political boundaries: Oostburg was situated on the mainland of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, which was part of Flanders, whilst the islands of Walcheren and Schouwen-Duiveland were part of *Fresia* (Frisia) (Henderikx 1995: 81). This border region was frequently disputed. After the Treaty of Verdun in the early 840s, the Scheldt was designated as the border between the west and middle kingdoms, but in the tumultuous years that followed the area frequently changed hands (Henderikx 1995: 80; James 1982: 176–81).

The power of local magnates was on the increase during the ninth century. In AD 861, the Flemish count Baldwin I eloped with Judith, Charles the Bald's eldest daughter and widow of the West Saxon kings Æthelwulf and Æthelbald (James 1982: 176; Koch 1981: 357). Charles had his daughter and her lover

excommunicated with immediate effect. In response, Baldwin forged an allegiance with a band of Vikings who at that moment occupied parts of Frisia, the coastal region that extends between Flanders and Denmark, before travelling to Rome to negotiate with the pope (Koch 1981: 358). Their eldest son, Baldwin II (AD 879–918), later married one of Alfred the Great's daughters and is sometimes dubbed the 'founding father' of Flanders (Koch 1981: 362, 365).

The *Vita Winnoci* (chap. 16) attributes the foundation of the fortress at Bergues-Saint-Winnoc as well as that of other, unnamed fortifications to Baldwin II. Henderikx (Henderikx 1995: 94–96; also see van Heeringen 1998: 246) has suggested that this list may also have included Oostburg, Veurne, and Bourbourg but does not include the four *ringwalburgen* on the islands of Walcheren and Schouwen-Duiveland, as these fell outside Baldwin's territory. The island of Walcheren was a royal estate in AD 860, when Lothar II granted part of it to the abbey of Echternach. The next mention of the island is in AD 972, when Otto II bestowed it on his new wife as a wedding gift (Henderikx 1995: 81). Ownership of Walcheren in the intervening period is uncertain. No documentary references of this period survive that can shed light on the identities of landowners on Schouwen-Duiveland.

Assuming that the four northern *ringwalburgen* were also *vluchtburgen*, Henderikx (Henderikx 1995: 94, 98; also see van Heeringen 1998: 245–46) places their construction in the period of quiet between two waves of Viking attacks, namely 879–92, and attributes it to local rulers whose identities are unknown. In order to explain the density of *ringwalburgen* on Walcheren, Henderikx (Henderikx 1995: 99–100; *contra* van Heeringen 1995d: 49–50 (see above)) has argued that occupation on the island prior to the late ninth century was dense and widespread, and fell prey to attacks often enough to warrant the construction of at least three refuges in close proximity. Henderikx (Henderikx 1995: 99–101; also see Loveluck and Tys 2006: 160) furthermore regards the coastal sites of Domburg and Burgh on Schouwen as strategically placed fortifications to defend the two above-mentioned *emporia*, suggesting continuity in settlement patterns, even though the coin evidence suggests that the *emporium* at Domburg, at least, was in decline by the 840s (see above).

Or an Imposition of External Power?

As stated above, recent archaeological investigations support the notion that occupation in Zeeland was of a more widespread and permanent nature than has been thought previously (van Dierendonck 2009: 268, 271; Loveluck and Tys 2006: 156–57). In this context, Loveluck and Tys (Loveluck and Tys 2006:

158–59) have drawn attention to an existing paradox in traditional interpretations of the *ringwalburgen* and pointed out that it is unlikely that fortresses of such a significant size and sophisticated nature would have been constructed to provide refuge for a limited seasonal population. Instead, they propose that the forts functioned both as refuges for a more widespread permanent population and as expressions of the imposition of 'inland' power on coastal communities (Loveluck and Tys 2006: 159–62). However, as stated above, there are no surviving charters or grants from 'inland' rulers relating to Walcheren and Schouwen-Duiveland predating the later tenth century, by which time three of the four *ringwalburgen* had reached the end of their occupation history. Only Middelburg subsequently developed into an administrative and religious centre. This may suggest that the imposition of inland power on coastal communities did not take place in this region until the turn of the millennium and incorporated a centralization of power in one centrally located fortified settlement, that of Middelburg.

Acknowledgement of the possibility that the *ringwalburgen* fulfilled more complex functions than merely as defensive refuge camps sheds interesting light on a third interpretation of these circular forts, namely, that the *ringwalburgen* were not defensive against the Vikings but constructed by the Vikings as strongholds and impositions of foreign power. This idea sprang forth from noted similarities in construction method between the late ninth-century *ringwalburgen* and the tenth-century Trelleborg fortresses (Randsborg 1980: 96–103; Trimpe Burger 1973: 355). The Trelleborg fortresses, attributed to the reign of Harald Bluetooth (*c*. 920–985/6), were likewise occupied only for a limited period of time and interpreted either as expressions of Harald's regal power and aspirations to unify Denmark and Norway into a single kingdom, or as 'mobilization centres' in the war between Denmark and the Frankish realm (Lund 1997: 161–62). Whatever their function, the evidence for craft-production, including gold and silver working, suggests that they were not garrisons (Lund 1997: 162). Despite the similarities between the Trelleborg fortresses and the *ringwalburgen*, Henderikx (Henderikx 1995: 98) maintains that the Danish fortresses are too late to argue that their construction method is ethnically 'Danish', even though it is still widely accepted that the sites in Zeeland served as prototypes for the Trelleborg fortresses (van Heeringen 1995d: 54; Randsborg 1980: 96).

Other evidence that has been brought forward to suggest that the Vikings were responsible for the construction of the *ringwalburgen* is historical in nature. An anecdote in the *Annals of St Bertin* (year 841) relates how Lothar (840–55) granted Walcheren to the Danish leader Harald, who, together with

a certain Roric, also held the *vicus* of Dorestad (*Annals of Fulda*: year 850) (Henderikx 1995: 83–84). This would place the construction of the *ringwalburgen* several decades too early to fit with the archaeological evidence, but there are records of other Viking leaders with territories in Frisia.

Harald died in 841, and after a period of hostility, Roric resumed power in Dorestad, along with certain other territories, in 850 (*Annals of St Bertin*: year 850). It is uncertain, however, whether Walcheren and Schouwen-Duiveland also belonged to his realm (Henderikx 1995: 85). Viking attacks on Frisia are recorded for the period during which Roric was in control, some of which he may have been involved in himself (Henderikx 1995: 85–86). Attacks on the Flemish coast, presumably via the river Scheldt, also resume in the 850s (*Annals of St Bertin*: year 850). They cease in 864, and there are indications — admittedly from eleventh- and twelfth-century sources — that some of the Vikings who campaigned in England in the 860s were from the Scheldt estuary; they were referred to as *Scaldingi*, a term that has been interpreted as referring to descendants from the *Scyldingas* mentioned in the epic poem *Beowulf*, but also to Scheldt-Vikings. Their leader, moreover, was Ubbo *dux Fresonum/ Fresciorum* (count of the Frisians) (*Annales Lindisfarnensis*: year 868; *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*: 202; for a discussion of the various interpretations, see Henderikx 1995: 87–88). This information compares interestingly to the above-mentioned passage from the *Annals of St Bertin* (year 837), which relates how the failure of Louis the Pious's coastal defences in the 830s was blamed on the disobedience of the Frisians.

In 879, raids in the Scheldt area resumed, but they were of a different character than previously; rather than hit-and-run raids on coastal locations, the Vikings now operated on horseback and ventured much further inland (Henderikx 1995: 89–91). Henderikx (Henderikx 1995: 89) suggests that during this period the Vikings must have established fortified base camps. Documentary evidence suggests that they established themselves in Ghent in 879, from where they raided the surrounding region, and moved to Kortrijk in 880. In 882, they overwintered in Condé along the upper Scheldt (*Annals of St Vaast*: year 882) (Henderikx 1995: 89). In 883, they raided the Flemish coastal areas (*Annals of St Vaast*: year 883). Henderikx (Henderikx 1995: 90) believes the Scheldt would have been used as an access route during this period. In 885, the army left for the Seine valley, although they returned in 891 to attack the *castella recens facta* (see above) (Henderikx 1995: 90–91).

Walcheren itself does not reappear in the various annals after the aforementioned attack in 837. However, the eleventh-century *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum*, written by Dudo of St Quentin to celebrate the acts

of the Norman dukes, portray Walcheren as a stopover for the Viking leader Rollo, future first Duke of Normandy, in the early 870s. Much in the *De moribus* — such as the notion that Rollo's journey to Normandy was inspired by a divine vision — is not reliable from a historical perspective, but there is no reason why the topographic detail should be incorrect as well.

Despite the evidence for Viking activity in the Scheldt estuary, Henderikx (Henderikx 1995: 94, 98) attributes the construction of the *ringwalburgen* to local Frankish authorities (see above). The possibility that the Vikings were responsible for their construction is, in his opinion, unlikely because of the lack of 'Scandinavian' objects in the finds assemblages (see above; also see van Heeringen 1995d: 44). However, such a straightforward equation of 'peoples' and artefacts is problematic. For example, very few 'Viking' objects have been found in Normandy; nevertheless, documentary evidence leaves no doubt that this was, indeed, a 'Viking' colony.

Discussion

Looking back at the debates that have surrounded the construction of the *ringwalburgen*, several trends become apparent. Some of the interpretations are grounded in the tradition that tried to 'fit' the archaeology with the historical source material, creating the kind of culture-historical approach that was, in the Anglo-American world, so severely attacked by the New Archaeologists of the 1970s and early 1980s (see, for example, the debate between Rahtz (Rahtz 1981) and Driscoll (Driscoll 1984)). That such approaches still prevailed in Dutch scholarship in the 1990s is apparent from a statement by van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995d: 50), who admitted to relying entirely on the historical source material to answer the questions by whom and against whom the defences were constructed, limiting the archaeological contribution to ascertaining when and how they were built. The same culture-historical emphasis has resulted in a tendency, at times, to group together sites with similar characteristics into a single, explanatory framework with clear (geographical) directions of cultural influence. However, circular and semicircular fortifications and/or street plans are by no means an uncommon phenomenon and occur across Europe and the rest of the world.

Recent interpretations have adopted a more local or even individual approach towards the various (semi)circular sites in Flanders and the Netherlands, and it is now acknowledged that the five *ringwalburgen* did not form one coherent group (see above). However, several issues remain overlooked. Firstly, the five

sites in Zeeland are located on the Flemish-Frisian border. Although this fact is widely acknowledged, the relevance of this liminal position in relation to the relative density of sites has never been addressed. In other words, rather than forming part of one defensive landscape, could the *ringwalburgen* constitute the material outcome of negotiations about control and power, whereby both sides were engaged in fortress-building? Secondly, the historical source material may contain relatively convincing evidence to argue that Frankish kings and nobles constructed some of the southern fortresses (see above), but the assumption that the sites all date to the same period rests entirely on their shared circular street pattern, which, as evidence, is unsustainable. In the case of the southern sites, more excavation is needed to ascertain their various foundation dates. In the case of the northern sites, a reappraisal of the evidence in the light of above-mentioned reservations is in order.

The remainder of this essay will focus on the northern *ringwalburgen* on the islands of Schouwen-Duiveland and Walcheren. A first issue lies with the place-name evidence. As stated above, on the basis of its directional prefix *oost* (east), Oostburg is no longer considered to be part of the same defensive 'group' as the northern sites. The names of the *ringwalburgen* on Walcheren make sense in relation to each other. (Oost-) Souburg (the south fortress) is situated to the south of Middelburg (the middle fortress), which is situated in the middle of the island, between Oost-Souburg and Domburg.[7] As mentioned above, Domburg means 'dune fortress', which can be taken to refer to its topographic setting. However, Burgh (simply meaning 'fortress'), the only site on the northern island of Schouwen-Duiveland, lacks a directional or topographical qualifier, which may not only suggest that it was the only *burg* on the island but also that it bore no relationship to the settlements on Walcheren. In this respect, it is similar to Den Burg (the fortress) on the northern island of Texel (Dijkstra and de Ridder 2009: 203–04).

Admittedly, without contemporary ninth- and tenth-century references to the five *burgen* it remains hazardous to base too many conclusions on place-name evidence alone. But how significant were their other common characteristics? Similarities in the construction method of the earthworks have often been emphasized, but then again, other methods for building an enclosed site in the low-lying sandy and clayey terrain of the Dutch and Flemish salt marshes may be limited. It has also been argued that all *ringwalburgen* could

---

[7] In addition to the modern village of Oost-Souburg, there is also a West-Souburg. The prefixes *oost* (east) and *west* (west) relate to later phases in the settlement development.

be entered via four main roads leading through four main entrance gates. However, archaeological evidence for such a street pattern has only been recognized in Oost-Souburg — Middelburg yielded evidence for a street, but not a cross-shaped street pattern — and whereas the (historical) street pattern of Domburg is convincingly cross-shaped as well, those of Burgh and Middelburg are less so (see van Heeringen 1995c: 26, fig. 15; van Heeringen, Henderikx, and Mars 1995: 14, fig. 3a–e). To this may be added the difference in size of the earthworks (Table 9.1), and the fact that in one case a natural waterway was incorporated, resulting in a similar use of the existing landscape as at Bruges and Antwerp (see above). All of this, along with the relatively limited extent of the excavation trenches in Middelburg, Domburg, and Burgh (Figure 9.2), makes it possible that some of the assumed similarities were imposed on the other sites because they were *believed* to be part of the same defensive landscape as Oost-Souburg, rather than existing similarities having led to their interpretation as one coherent group.

Their interpretation as *vluchtburgen* (van Dierendonck 2009: 257; van Heeringen 1995d: 50; Henderikx 1995: 71) also warrants reassessment. Van Heeringen (van Heeringen 1995d: 50–51) draws attention to the absence of features, finds, or organic remains (such as dung) from the buried soil on top of which the *burgen* were constructed, and questions whether the *ringwalburgen* ever fulfilled the function they were supposedly constructed for. What is more, there is no evidence that they ever suffered Viking attack (van Heeringen 1998: 246–47). It has been argued above that the layer of clean sand at the bottom of the occupation sequence inside the excavated *ringwalburgen* does not constitute proof of an extended 'empty' phase. What is more, the radiocarbon dates are problematic, and most of the *ringwalburgen* have produced ninth-century pottery, which suggests a near-contemporary date for rampart construction and occupation. Slight variations between the *ringwalburgen* do occur, such as the slightly earlier date for the occupation of Burgh compared with Oost-Souburg (see above). A (near-)absence of ninth-century wares has also been noted for Domburg, but here recent stratigraphic evidence clearly reveals that occupation predated the second phase rampart (van Dierendonck 2009: 263–64) (see above). The possibility that the earliest occupants of the *ringwalburgen* were aceramic, like the shepherds who supposedly occupied the area in the preceding period (or, indeed, the Vikings), has never been acknowledged.

It is held that construction of the *ringwalburgen* coincided with a period of relative peace and quiet, followed by a change in character of the Viking attacks, whereby the raiders ventured much further inland (van Dierendonck 2009: 254; Henderikx 1995: 89–91) (see above). Their coastal and estua-

rine locations have been used to argue that they occupied strategic positions (Henderikx 1995: 99–101). However, we should not forget that the Scheldt was also a major trade route, and evidence for long-distance contacts is indeed plentiful in the *ringwalburgen*.[8] In this aspect, the finds assemblages differ significantly from finds assemblages from the West Saxon burhs (Carver 1987: 47; Vince 1994: 114, 118). For example, in Cricklade almost no pottery dating from before the eleventh century has been found, and almost all the pre-Conquest wares were locally produced (Radford 1972: 90).

Henderikx (Henderikx 1995: 102) has suggested that the *ringwalburgen* lost their importance because they were no longer needed when the Viking Age came to an end. However, even if one can debate the original function of the *ringwalburgen*, the archaeological evidence is clear that they were not used as *vluchtburgen* for some decades prior to their abandonment, which questions the validity of his explanation. Is it possible, after all, that they were Viking foundations that were built to accommodate a group of settlers and to serve as bases for their raiding missions, and which were abandoned again after the period of Scandinavian settlement in Frisia came to an end?

As discussed above, one of the prevailing reasons for the scepticism in Dutch and Flemish scholarship to accept the possibility that some of the *ringwalburgen* were Viking foundations is the fact that no 'Viking' artefacts have been found; but this not really the case. Firstly, there is of course the 'Viking' necklace from Domburg. Secondly, there is the Scandinavian-style toilet set from Domburg, which, even if not of Scandinavian manufacture, still expresses an affinity with things that pertain to a 'Scandinavian' identity and could have been produced locally by a Viking settler. Thirdly, there is the soapstone vessel fragment from Oost-Souburg, with its south-western Swedish provenance. Similar finds have been made in other regions that were subject to Scandinavian activity, such as the Shetland islands and the 'Viking' towns of northern England, and there they are commonly interpreted as personal possessions of Viking settlers (Forster, Thomas, and Driscoll 2004; Vince 2003: 295). Add to this the large number of high-quality Norwegian hones — also found in the Viking Age layers in Lincoln (Vince 2003: 294) — and the evidence for weaponry, boat hooks, horse fittings (in particular spurs), and iron smithing, using

---

[8] Interestingly, Dijkstra and de Ridder (Dijkstra and de Ridder 2009: 215) draw attention to the fact that fewer circular fortresses have been identified for the densely occupied Rhine and Meuse estuary, whilst the sparsely populated salt marshes of Zeeland supposedly witnessed the foundation of at least five fortresses. They explain this by suggesting that older, Roman forts may have been reused in the Rhine and Meuse estuaries.

— to a degree — imported ores (see above), and the suggestion that this may be a 'Viking' settlement seems less fanciful. Furthermore, the poor quality of the metalwork assemblage has also been noted for the areas of Viking settlement in England (Leahy 2007).

The absence of coin compares interestingly to the picture sketched above. The decline in the use of coinage in the tenth century is a widespread phenomenon and has also been noted for other parts of the Netherlands and England. In England, this has been taken as an indication for a shift towards a dual economy, whereby the monetary use of coin declined in favour of a greater emphasis on the value of metal by weight as a result of contacts with the non-monetary Viking world (Graham-Campbell 2001). Frequent finds of small lead and iron weights from known Viking settlements such as Torksey (Blackburn 2002; Brown 2006) and Lincoln (ten Harkel 2010) confirm this view. Weights of similar type have been found in Oost-Souburg (see above). The practice of hoarding may also have to be placed in this context, as coin was increasingly used to store wealth, and coin deposits from the Scheldt Valley and two Viking hoards on the island of Wieringen further north along the coast in the province of Noord Holland — interpreted as evidence for Viking settlement on Wieringen, however short-lasting — deserve mention in this context (Besteman 2004).[9]

Other evidence is of a more subtle nature. Particularly interesting is the evidence for textile production. Despite the presence of spindle whorls, no loom weights have been found in Oost-Souburg. Lauwerier and van Klaveren (Lauwerier and van Klaveren 1995: 206) have suggested that its inhabitants were involved in spinning but not in weaving, and that wool was exported as a raw material. However, the number of spindle whorls is barely suggestive of industrial-scale activity. The evidence from Viking Age Lincoln in England provides an interesting parallel. Excavations in the city have produced several Viking Age spindle whorls but, as in Oost-Souburg, no loom weights (Vince 2003: 287). In this case, it has been suggested that the Scandinavian settlement brought with it the introduction of a new type of loom, similar to the example found in the Oseberg ship burial, which did not require the use of loom weights (Vince 2003: 287).

Comparison with the Danelaw reveals more interesting possibilities. In the second half of the ninth century, Anglo-Saxon handmade pottery was

[9] Besteman (Besteman 2004: 103–08) acknowledges there are clear similarities between Wieringen and Walcheren, although, following established scholarship, he interprets the *ringwalburgen* as *vluchtburgen* for the local population.

replaced in the Scandinavian-controlled areas with locally produced wheel-thrown wares that were so similar to continental wares that initially, before thin-section analysis was widely applied, much of the locally produced wheel-thrown pottery was routinely mistaken for continental imports from northern France and the Rhineland (Vince 2005). The habit of producing wheel-thrown wares started in the Scandinavian-controlled regions of England, centring on Viking towns such as Lincoln and Stamford, before migrating further south in the course of the tenth century. It is therefore commonly argued that the new industries arrived in England as a result of the Scandinavian settlement (Vince 2005). Although the settlers themselves came from a non-ceramic background, they would have been familiar with wheel-thrown pottery industry from the Frankish realms (ten Harkel 2010: 231–40; Vince 2005). The presence of Carolingian-style pottery in Viking settlements in northern England reveals that the presence of such wares does not necessarily imply that its users were Frankish. Admittedly, most of the pottery from the *ringwalburgen* consists of real imports, which are practically absent in the Danelaw; however, the Oost-Souburg assemblage includes evidence that experimentation with the production of Rhineland-type wares also occurred in the Zeeland region (see above).

Finally, there are the inhumations below the rampart of Domburg. Two of them may have been eighth-century in date, which would suggest that they were reinterred after the construction of the earthworks had disturbed their locations, implying a degree of unfamiliarity with the landscape on the part of the people who built the *ringwalburg*, especially as the burials were not particularly ancient. Alternatively, they were contemporary and related to the ninth-century coffined burial also known from Domburg which reuses ship's timbers. The use of boat timber for the construction of a coffin has also been identified at York and at Barton-upon-Humber (ten Harkel 2010: 109–10; Waldron 2007). In the latter case, stable isotope analysis has revealed that some of the individuals had been born in the Irish Sea region, and may therefore be 'Irish' Vikings (Hadley 2008: 176; MacPherson 2006).

Comparison not only with England but also with other regions in Frisia can provide clues regarding the identities of the inhabitants of the *ringwalburgen*. For example, the circular fortress at Borgumsberg, on the island Föhr (Germany), displays clear similarities to the Trelleborg fortresses. What is more, its find assemblage is similar to that of Oost-Souburg, including Carolingian pottery such as Pingsdorf ware, soapstone vessel fragments, iron arrow-heads, knives, fishing hooks, and hone- and quernstones, although in this case loom weights were also found (Segschneider 2009: 107). Less than 30 km to the south, on the island Sylt, the circular fort of Tinnumburg also

produced evidence for Viking Age activity (Segschneider 2009: 104–05). Like the *ringwalburgen*, these northern sites were located on islands in relatively close proximity and in a liminal position, in this case the border territories of Frisia and Denmark (Segschneider 2009: 110). However, rather than as a *vluchtburg*, Borgumsberg has been interpreted as an expression of the imposition of external power onto the landscape and attributed to one of the Danish nobles who were briefly granted territory in Frisia (Dobat 2009: 67). Could a similar explanation be suggested for the *ringwalburgen* on Walcheren and Schouwen? An interesting detail is provided by the twelfth-century *vita* of St Willibrord, written by Thiofrid of Echternach, which records that the Ottonian King Henry II (1002–24) granted the *villa Walcras* (Walcheren) to Count Baldwin IV (988–1035) of Flanders in 1012 (van Heeringen 1998: 247). As we have seen, the early eleventh century was also the period during which the *ringwalburgen* of Oost-Souburg, Domburg, and Burgh declined. The possibility exists that this was the moment at which 'inland' power was imposed on the coastal communities of southern Frisia, rather than a century before (see Loveluck and Tys 2006).

In sum, it is clear that the study of the *ringwalburgen* in Zeeland will benefit from further comparative research. A review of the available evidence has revealed that they fall into at least two, perhaps three, distinct groups, each with their own sets of contacts. The construction method of the northern sites seems to belong to a northern European tradition, and although it has long been held that the finds do not constitute evidence for a Viking presence, closer analysis reveals that this can no longer be maintained. Instead of a landscape of defence, the Scheldt estuary may have been a landscape of negotiation whereby different competing factions engaged in fortification building in order to lay claim to land, people, and resources.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Arnold, Thomas (ed.). 1882. *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, in *Symeonis monachi opera omnia*, 2 vols, Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores, 75 (London, 1882–85), I, 196–214

Christiansen, Eric (trans.). 1998. *Dudo of St Quentin: History of the Normans* (Woodbridge)

Holder-Egger, Oswald (ed.). 1888. *Ex vita Winnoci*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores*, 34 vols (Hannover: 1826–), xv. 2, 775–78

——— (ed.). 1905. *The Miracles of St. Bertin*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores*, 34 vols (Hannover: 1826–), xv. 1, 507–22

Nelson, Janet (trans.). 1991. *The Annals of St. Bertin*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series: Ninth-Century Histories, 1 (Manchester)

Pertz, Georg Heinrich (ed.). 1866. *Annales Lindisfarnenses*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores*, 34 vols (Hannover: 1826–), xix, 502–07

Rau, Reinhold (ed. and trans.). 1972. *Annales Vedastini*, Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte, 2 (Darmstadt), pp. 290–337

Rau, Reinhold (ed. and trans.). 1977. *Annales Xantenses*, Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte, 1 (Darmstadt), pp. 255–384

Reuter, Timothy (trans.). 1992. *The Annals of Fulda*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series: Ninth-Century Histories, 2 (Manchester)

Secondary Studies

Anonymous. 1990. *Ontstaan en vroegste geschiedenis van de Middeleeuwse steden in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden: een archeologisch en historisch probleem; handelingen van het 14e Internationaal Colloquium in Spa, 6–8 sept. 1988*, Historische Uitgaven, 83 (Brussels)

Bartels, Michiel H., and Bart Vermeulen. 2009. 'Die frühmittelalterlich unwallten Siedlungen Deventer und Zutphen in den östlichen Niederlanden', in *Ringwälle und verwandte Strukturen des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. an Nord- und Ostsee*, ed. by Martin Segschneider (Neumünster), pp. 219–48

Besteman, Jan C. 2004. 'Two Viking Hoards from the Former Island of Wieringen (the Netherlands): Viking Relations in Frisia in an Archaeological Perspective', in *Land, Sea and Home: Settlement in the Viking Period*, ed. by John Hines, Alan Lane, and Mark Redknap, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monographs, 20 (Leeds), pp. 93–108

Blackburn, Mark A. B. 2002. 'Finds from the Anglo-Scandinavian site of Torksey', in *Moneta Mediævalis: Studia numizmatyczne i historiyczne ofiarowane Profesorowi Stanislawowi Suchodolskiemu w 65. roznice urodizin. Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk*, ed. by R. Kiernowski and others (Warsaw), pp. 89–101

Blok, Dirk Peter. 1979. *De Franken in Nederland*, 3rd edn (Haarlem)

Blok, Dirk Peter, and others (eds). 1981. *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden I* (Haarlem)

Braat, Wouter C. 1941. 'Souburg en Middelburg', *Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden*, 22, 52–69

——, 1954. 'Burgh op Schouwen', *Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden*, 35, 8–17

Brown, Hannah. 2006. 'Torksey, Lincolnshire, in the Anglo-Scandinavian Period' (unpublished master's dissertation, University of York)

Carver, Martin. 1987. *Underneath English Towns: Interpreting Urban Archaeology* (London)

Clarke, Helen, and Bjorn Ambrosiani. 1991. *Towns in the Viking Age* (Leicester)

Colyer, Christina, Brian J. J. Gilmour, and Michael J. Jones. 1999. *The Defences of the Lower City: Excavations at the Park and West Parade 1970–2 and a Discussion of other Sites Excavated up to 1994*, The Archaeology of Lincoln, 7. 2 (York)

Dekowna, Maria. 1990. *Das archäologische Fundmaterial V* (Neumünster)

Dierendonck, Robert M. van. 2009. 'The Early Medieval Circular Fortresses in the Province of Zeeland, The Netherlands: Ten Years After', in *Ringwälle und verwandte Strukturen des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. an Nord- und Ostsee*, ed. by Martin Segschneider (Neumünster), pp. 249–74

Dijkstra, Menno, and Tim de Ridder. 2009. 'Circular Fortresses in the Provinces of North and South Holland', in *Ringwälle und verwandte Strukturen des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. an Nord- und Ostsee*, ed. by Martin Segschneider (Neumünster), pp. 201–18

Dobat, Andres Siegfried. 2009. 'Die südskandinavischen Burgen vom Typ Trelleborg', in *Ringwälle und verwandte Strukturen des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. an Nord- und Ostsee*, ed. by Martin Segschneider (Neumünster), pp. 51–70

Driscoll, Stephen. T. 1984. 'The New Medieval Archaeology: Theory versus History', *Scottish Archaeological Review*, 3, 104–09

Forster, Amanda K., Jo Thomas, and S. J. Driscoll. 2004. 'Spatial Analysis and Cultural Indicators: Viking Settlers at Old Scatness Broch, Shetland?', in *Land, Sea and Home: Settlement in the Viking Period*, ed. by John Hines, Alan Lane, and Mark Redknap, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monographs, 20 (Leeds), pp. 219–34

Gazeau, Véronique, Pierre Baduin, and Yves Modéran (eds). 2008. *Identité et ethnicité: concepts, débats historiographiques, exemples (IIIᵉ-XIIᵉ siècles)* (Caen)

Graham-Campbell, James. 2001. 'The Dual Economy of the Danelaw', *British Numismatic Journal*, 71, 49–59

Hadley, Dawn M. 2008. 'Ethnicity and Identity in Context: The Material Culture of Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', in *Identité et ethnicité: concepts, débats historiographiques, exemples (IIIᵉ-XIIᵉ siècles)*, ed. by Véronique Gazeau, Pierre Baduin, and Yves Modéran (Caen), pp. 163–83

Harkel, Letty ten. 2010. 'Lincoln in the Viking Age: A "Town" in Context' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield)

Heeringen, Robert. M. van. 1989. 'Archeologische kroniek van Zeeland over 1988', *Archief: Mededelingen van het Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen*, 1989, 129–54

——, 1992a. 'Archeologische kroniek van Zeeland over 1991', *Archief: Mededelingen van het Koninklijk Zeeuws Genootschap de Wetenschappen*, 1992, 117–43

——, 1992b. 'De ontdekking van de 'Duinburcht' van Domburg', *Walacria*, 4, 57–64

——, 1993. 'Archeologische kroniek van Zeeland over 1992', *Archief: Mededelingen van het Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen*, 1993, 187–203

——, 1994. 'Archeologische kroniek van Zeeland over 1993', *Archief: Mededelingen van het Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen*, 1994, 230–42

——, 1995a. 'Glas en metaal', in *Vroeg-middeleeuwse ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), pp. 171–83

——, 1995b. 'De grondsporen', in *Vroeg-middeleeuwse ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), pp. 115–43

——, 1995c. 'Inleiding: De burgterreinen in hun huidige gedaante', in *Vroeg-middeleeuwse ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), p. 15

——, 1995d. 'Kolonisatie en bewoning in het mondingsgebied van de Schelde in de vroege middeleeuwen vanuit archeologisch perspectief', in *Vroeg-middeleeuwse ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), pp. 40–70

——, 1995e. 'De resultaten van het archeologisch onderzoek van de Zeeuwse ringwalburgen', in *Vroeg-middeleeuwse ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), pp. 17–39

——, 1998. 'The Construction of Frankish Circular Fortresses in the Province of Zeeland (SW Netherlands) in the End of the Ninth Century', *Château Gaillard*, 18, 241–49

Heeringen, Robert M. van, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (eds). 1995. *Vroeg-middeleeuwse ringwalburgen in Zeeland* (Goes)

Heeringen, Robert M. van and F. Verhaeghe. 1995. 'Het aardewerk', in *Vroeg-middeleeuwse ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), pp. 145–70

Henderikx, Peter A. 1993. 'Walcheren van de 6ᵉ tot de 12ᵉ eeuw: nederzettingsgeschiedenis in fragmenten', *Archief: Mededelingen van het Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen*, 1993, 113–56

——, 1995. 'De ringwalburgen in het mondingsgebied van de Schelde in historisch perspectief', in *Vroeg-middeleeuwse ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), pp. 71–112

Huizinga, Johan. 1935. 'Burg en Kerspel in Walcheren', *Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Academie van Wetenschappen, Afdeeling Letterkunde*, 80 (B: 2), 27–62

James, Edwards. 1982. *The Origins of France: From Clovis to the Capetians, 500–1000* (London)

Jones, Michael, David Stocker, and Alan Vince. 2003. *The City by the Pool: Assessing the Archaeology of the City of Lincoln*, Lincoln Archaeological Studies, 10 (Oxford)

Joosten, Ineke. 1995. 'Slakken en ijzerbewerking', in *Vroeg-middeleeuwse ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), pp. 173–78

Kars, Henk. 1995. 'De voorwerpen van natuursteen', in *Vroeg-middeleeuwse ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), pp. 184–91

Koch, Anton C. F. 1981. 'Het Graafschap Vlaanderen van de 9e eeuw tot 1070', in *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden I*, ed. by Dirk Peter Blok and others (Haarlem), pp. 354–84

Lauwerier, Roel C. G. M. 1995. 'Veeteelt in Oost-Souburg', in *Vroeg-middeleeuwse ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), pp. 213–18

Lauwerier, Roel C. G. M., and Robert M. van Heeringen, 1995. 'Objects of Bone, Antler and Horn from the Circular Fortress of Oost-Souburg, the Netherlands (AD 900–975)', *Medieval Archaeology*, 39, 71–90

Lauwerier, Roel C. G. M., and H. W. van Klaveren. 1995. 'Bewerkt bot', in *Vroeg-Middeleeuwse Ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), pp. 193–212

Leahy, Kevin. 2007. *The Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Lindsey* (Stroud)

Loveluck, Chris P., and Dries Tys. 2006. 'Coastal Societies, Exchange and Identity along the Channel and Southern North Sea Shores of Europe, AD 600–1000', *Journal of Maritime Archaeology*, 1, 140–69

Lund, Niels. 1997. 'The Danish Empire and the End of the Viking Age', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings*, ed. by Peter Sawyer (Oxford), pp. 156–81

MacPherson, Pam. 2006. 'Tracing Change: An Isotopic Investigation of Anglo-Saxon Childhood Diet' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield)

Mestdagh, Marcel. 1989. *De Vikingen bij Ons: Het Grote Leger (879–892) in België en Frankrijk* (Gent)

Meulemeester, Johnny de. 1980. 'De circulaire versterking te Veurne', *Archaeologia Belgica*, 223, 109–13

——, 1981. 'De warandemote te Veurne', *Archaeologia Belgica*, 238, 72–75

——, 1990. 'Karolingische castra en stadsontwikkeling: enkele archeo-topografische suggesties', in *Ontstaan en vroegste geschiedenis van de Middeleeuwse steden in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden: een archeologisch en historisch probleem; handelingen van het 14e Internationaal Colloquium in Spa, 6–8 sept. 1988*, Historische Uitgaven, 83 (Brussels), 117–49

Ottaway, Peter. 1992. *Anglo-Scandinavian Ironwork from 16–22 Coppergate*, The Archaeology of York, 17.6 (London)

Pol, Arent. 1995. 'Middeleeuwse munten van het Domburgse strand', in *Vroeg-Middeleeuwse Ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), pp. 45–49

Radford, C. A. Ralegh. 1972. 'Excavations at Cricklade, 1948–1963', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, 67, 61–111

Rahtz, Phillip. 1981. *The New Medieval Archaeology: Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the University of York, November 12 1980* (York)

Randsborg, Klavs. 1980. *The Viking Age in Denmark: The Formation of a State* (London)

Riddler, I. 1990. 'Ein Stielkamm aus Haithabu', in *Das archäologische Fundmaterial V*, ed. by Maria Dekowna (Neumünster), pp. 177–81

Sawyer, Peter. 1982. *Kings and Vikings: Scandinavia and Europe, AD 700–1100* (London)

——, (ed.). 1997. *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings* (Oxford)

Segschneider, Martin. 2009. 'Die Ringwälle auf den nordfriesischen Inseln', in *Ringwälle und verwandte Strukturen des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. an Nord- und Ostsee*, ed. by Martin Segschneider (Neumünster), pp. 99–111

Trimpe Burger, Jan A. 1973. 'Oost-Souburg, Province of Zeeland: A Preliminary Report on the Excavation of the Site of an Ancient Fortress (1969–1971)', *Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek*, 23, 355–65

——, 1985. 'Aardenburg – Rodanburg – Burg aan de Rudannâ', *Naamkunde*, 17, 335–46

Veeckman, Johan. 2009. 'The Semi-Circular Fortified Medieval Settlement of Antwerp, Belgium', in *Ringwälle und verwandte Strukturen des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. an Nord- und Ostsee*, ed. by Martin Segschneider (Neumünster), pp. 275–84

Verhaeghe, Frans. 1995. 'Het vroeg-Middeleeuwse geglazuurde aardewerk uit Oost-Souburg', in *Vroeg-Middeleeuwse Ringwalburgen in Zeeland*, ed. by Robert M. van Heeringen, Peter A. Henderikx, and Alexandra Mars (Goes), pp. 155–69

Verhulst, Adriaan. 1999. *The Rise of Cities in North-West Europe* (Cambridge)

Vince, Alan 1994. 'Saxon Urban Economies: An Archaeological Perspective', in *Environment and Economy in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by James Rackham, Council for British Archaeology, Research Report, 89 (York), pp. 108–19

——, 2003. 'The New Town: Lincoln in the High Medieval Era (*c.* 890 to *c.* 1350); Archaeological Account', in *The City by the Pool: Assessing the Archaeology of the City of Lincoln*, ed. by Michael Jones, David Stocker, and Alan Vince, Lincoln Archaeological Studies, 10 (Oxford), pp. 160–296

——, 2005. 'Ceramic Petrology and the Study of Anglo-Saxon and Later Medieval Ceramics', *Medieval Archaeology*, 49, 219–45

Waldron, Tony. 2007. *St Peter's, Barton-upon-Humber, Lincolnshire: A Parish Church and its Community*, ii: *The Human Remains* (Oxford)

Werveke, H. van. 1965. 'De oudste burchten aan de Vlaamse en de Zeeuwse kust', *Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Letteren*, 27. 1, 3–22

Frankish and Slavic Fortifications in Germany from the Seventh to the Eleventh Centuries

Peter Ettel

In the early Middle Ages, the period from the sixth/seventh to the tenth/eleventh century, there were two principal regions with typical constructions of fortifications and castles:[1] the Frankish, or mainly Frankish, area and the Slavic area. Both regions were well defined in the early Middle Ages but not isolated. Besides many differences, both areas exhibit many common characteristics and each influenced the other.

Introduction

To put the results of past research into perspective one must take into account the political situation of the twentieth century. The dividing line between the two regions coincided over a long distance with the twentieth-century border between the former German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany (Figure 10.1). This situation had a substantial influence on the nature of research, which consequently followed different directions and different approaches either side of the former border. In 1990 Germany was reunited, and thus both areas can now be compared much more easily (Ettel 2008).

---

[1] The term 'castle' is used in this essay as a direct translation from the German 'Burg', and therefore does not imply any distinction of size or socio-economic function implicit in the use of this term in English.

Peter Ettel is Professor of Pre- and Early History at the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena.
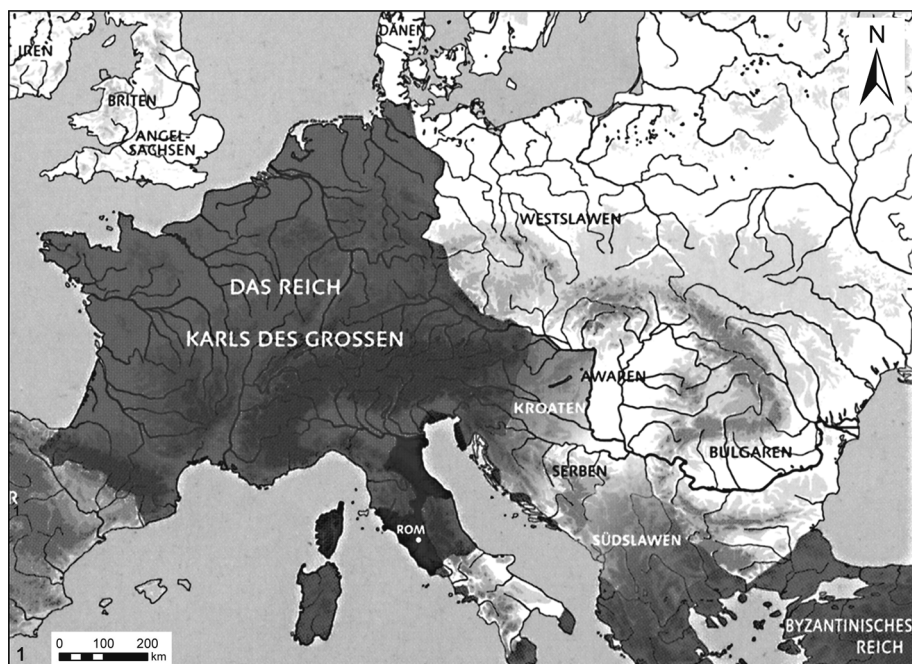
Figure 10.1.
(1) Empire of Charles the Great
c. 800 and the area of the Westslavs.
(2) Germany with its provinces.
— former GDR with Mecklenburg-
Western Pomerania, Brandenburg,
Saxon-Anhalt, Thuringia, Saxony.
von Freeden and von Schnurbein
2002: 317, fig. 553.
Reproduced with permission.

For a long time research on castles in both regions centred on issues of chronology and typology of fortifications, although it then became increasingly concentrated on archaeological excavation, including investigations into the techniques of constructing foundations and the structure of interior space. The environment of castles has been investigated in both regions, although research in this field in the German Democratic Republic achieved much better progress on account of ideological-political objectives with regard to the Slavic background.

I will make only brief reference here to the earliest fortifications in Germany, those of the Migration Period of the fourth and fifth centuries (Werner 1965; Brachmann 1993: 17–18, fig. 9; Steuer 1990; Steuer 1997; recently Steuer 2005). These hilltop settlements were subsequently abandoned in the sixth century, in the early Merovingian period, and appear to have played no social or political role: there is no positive evidence of castle construction in sixth-century Germany.

A new phase of fortification began in the later Merovingian period, especially in the second half of the seventh century, particularly in the Frankish or mainly Frankish area, followed very soon afterwards — or even simultaneously — in the Slavic castle area. The Carolingian empire describes the extent of Frankish castles in contrast to the Slavic castle region. From this period a continuous development of castle building occurred up to the end of the tenth century, from which point a break can be seen in the Frankish area. In the Slavic region, however, development continued unbroken up to the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century, a period marked by disputes with the Ottonians and Salians.

In the early medieval period, between the seventh and tenth centuries, a further group of castles, characterized in particular by the Saxon castles, developed in northwest Germany (Figure 10.2 (1)), although this topic is beyond the scope of the present essay (von Uslar 1964: 74–75; Brachmann 1993: 124–64; Heine 2008).

Over one thousand early medieval castles are known in the Germanic-Frankish area and more than six hundred in the Slavic region (Figure 10.2). Only a fraction of these sites is recorded in historical sources and the majority have been identified by archaeological methods (see, for example, the list published by Brachmann 1993: 212–56; Kempke 2002; Donat 2002).

In the mainly Frankish area there are three types of fortification. The first are ring walls, such as Tilleda (Figure 10.3 (4)), Büraburg (Figure 10.3 (2)), and Roßtal (Figure 10.4 (1)). The second category comprises promontory forts such as the Karlburg (Figure 10.5 (5)). The third type, geometrical castles, is

1
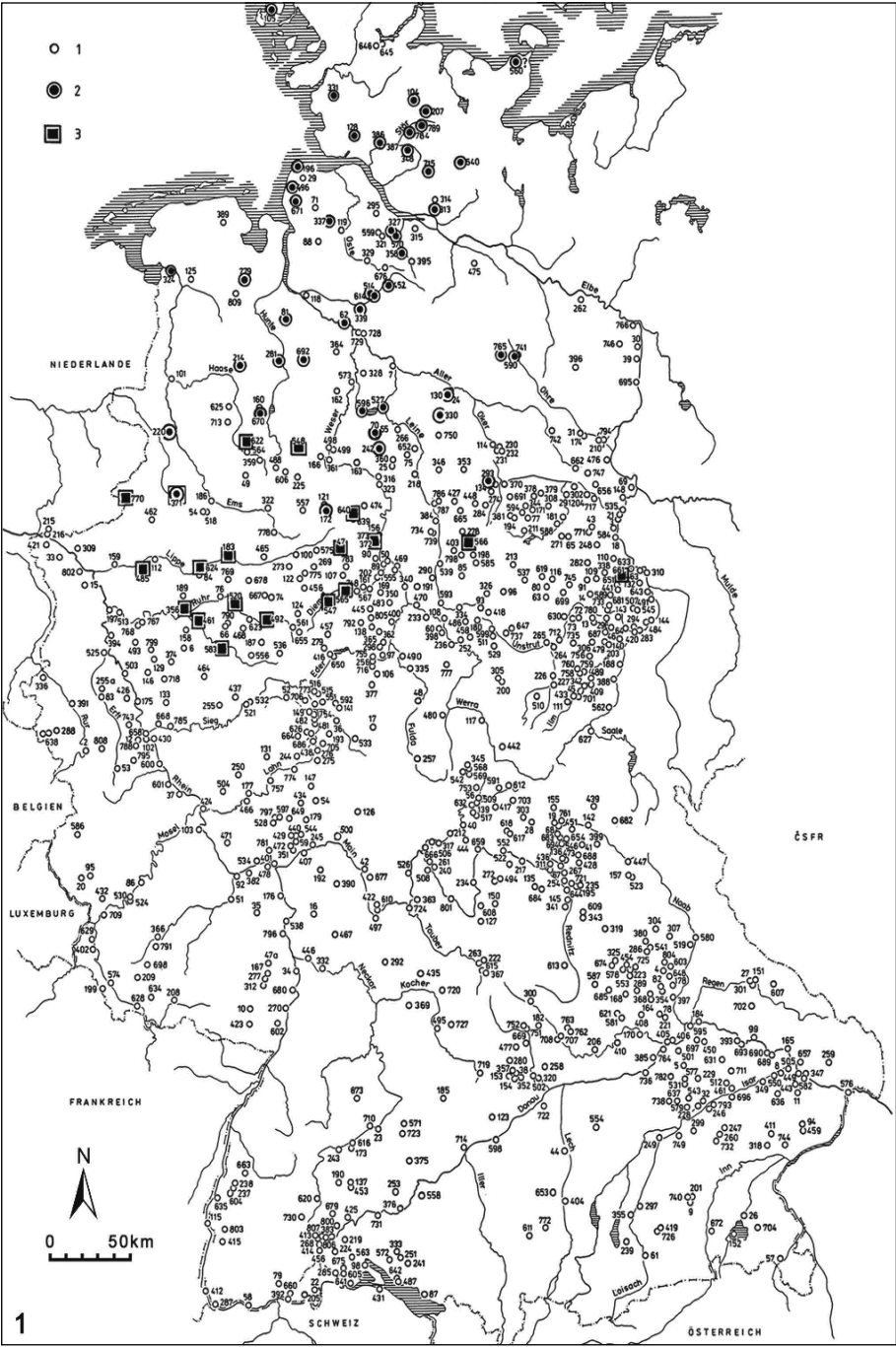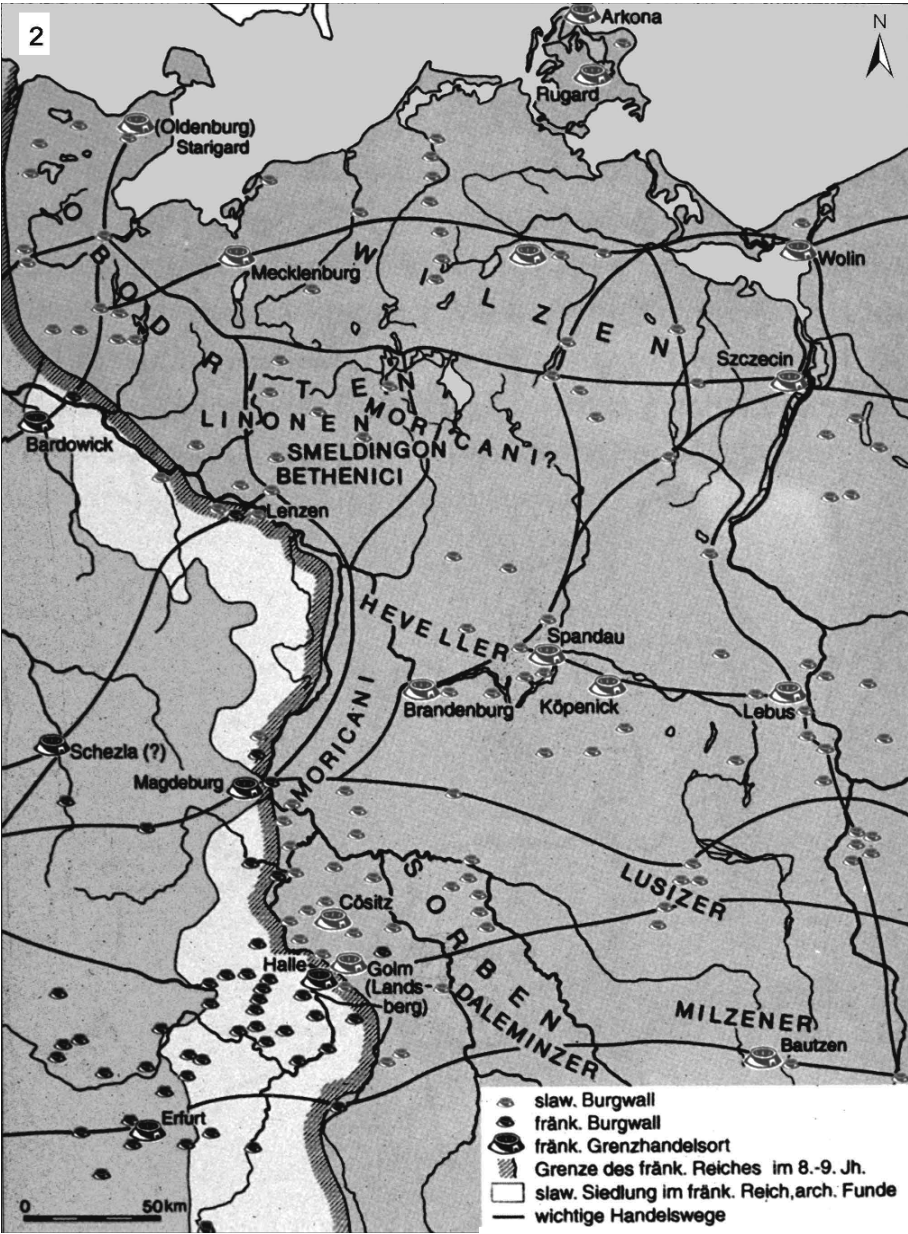
Figure 10.2. (1) 1: Saxon ring walls, 2: fortifications of the eighth/ninth century in the Frankish-Saxon border region and, 3: in comparison to the castles of the first millennium (AC). (2) The Frankish Empire in the eighth/ninth century and the Slavic tribes mentioned in written sources. Menghin and Planck 2002: 344, fig. 5; Brachmann 1993, insert 4. Reproduced with permission.

1 c

2

——	Mauern, ergraben und ergänzt (für Per. II)	⊞	Ebenerdige Gebäude, ergraben und ergänzt	†† Gräberfeld
				······· Altwege
	Gräben, ergraben und ergänzt	○	Eingetiefte Gebäude, ergraben und ergänzt	0 50 m

3

1	Haus mit Steinfundament	7	Pfosten
2	Grubenhaus	8	Mörtelwanne
3	Gruben, Langgruben	9	Feuerstelle
4	Umfassungsmauer	10	Standspur
5	Weg	11	Töpferofen
6	wie 1-5, vermutet	12	Einzelbestattung

0   50 m

4

5

Figure 10.3. (opposite) (1) Types of fortifications: (a) bivalve dry stone wall at the Eiringsburg; (b) dry stone wall with wood-earth construction (above) and dry stone wall with mortar wall and towers of the younger Ottonian period in Roßtal (bottom); (c) earth rampart at the Karlburg. (2) Büraburg: plan from 1996. (3) Reconstruction of the south-east corner of the Büraburg, *c*. 750. (4) Tilleda: plan of the tenth and eleventh centuries. (5) Tilleda: Plan of the main castle, first half of the eleventh century (above) and at the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth century (below). (2) Wand 1998: 178, fig. 4. (3) Wand 1998: 183, fig. 11. (4) Eberhardt and Grimm 2001: Gesamtplan. (5) Eberhardt and Grimm 2001: 45, 465. Reproduced with permission.

characterized by the fact that they are not adapted to immediate topographical features, so that walls often run in straight lines, as at the Eiringsburg (Figure 10.5 (1)), and can cut off mountain spurs or parts of a plateau (for an overview see von Uslar 1964, summarized by Abels 1979: 36–37; Ettel 2001: 202–03). A typical characteristic of all three types is that they were usually built on hilltops and thus represent hill-fort settlements. On the contrary, while castles in the Slavic area were also frequently erected on hills, these are usually in the lowlands, for example on the plains of Brandenburg or Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

Fortifications in the mainly Frankish region consist of a wall construction with a ditch in front of the wall, the former can be either V-shaped or U-shaped in profile, sometimes with a berm. Gates are arranged either as pincer gates or as chamber gates. Excavation at various sites has established three basic types of construction: dry stone walls, mortared walls, and earth ramparts (Figure 10.3 (1a–c)). A fourth type — erected mainly with wood and earth — is typical of many Slavic regions.

Dry stone walls can be either free-standing, as at Eiringsburg, or erected with a construction of wood and earth behind, as in the first phase at Roßtal (Figure 10.3 (1a and b), above). Mortar walls can also be free-standing, as at Büraburg, or partly faced, as in the second phase at Roßtal (Figure 10.3 (1b), below). Dry stone walls and mortared walls are common in the construction of castles east of the Rhine in the whole of East Francia from the beginning of their use in medieval times: a development from dry stone walls to mortar walls is evident (von Uslar 1964; Brachmann 1988; Ettel 2001: 204). In the tenth century mortar technology came to be generally used for reinforcement of wall faces or for free-standing constructions accompanied by external single or multiple towers as at Roßtal. By the eleventh century, mortar building became generally adopted in the Frankish area, in contrast with the Slavic area, where it only became common practice by the turn of the thirteenth century.

1

2

3

4

5

Figure 10.4. (opposite) (1) Topographical plan of Roßtal with the excavated areas. (2) Reconstructions of granaries/haylofts (a), pithouses (b), and post-houses (c). (3) South-west corner of Roßtal with radial fences, post-buildings, pit 2, pithouses 6 and 7, and line of the fortification. (4) Sulzbach-Rosenberg: proposed reconstruction, and (5) reconstruction of the main castle at the end of the tenth century (phase III). (N.B. the light-grey plans show only the built-up areas and are not real ground plans). (4–5) Hensch 2005, pl. 27. Reproduced with permission.

The third type of fortification, earth ramparts, are documented at the Karlburg castle (Figure 10.5 (5b)). Such barriers are usually called 'Hungarian' walls with reference to St Gall where in 926, according to the report of Ekkehart IV during the threat of Hungarian invasions, an earth rampart was erected, known as the fortification of Häggenschwil (von Uslar 1964: 161–162). In the German area earth ramparts have been identified by topographical study and by excavations; they are generally between 4–6 m high and 9–10 m wide, while the associated ditches have an average width of 10–12 m (M. Schulze 1984; Sage 1990; Schwarz 1972; Schwarz 1975; Rödelsee, Schwanberg, Landkreis Kitzingen: Abels 1979: 111; Wamser 1986; Ettel 2001: 218). This type of fortification was relatively quick and easy to build, requiring little technical knowledge. The combination of ditches and ramparts was particularly suitable as a defence against mounted troops and was developed in response to the Hungarian invasions in the years 908 to 955, which reduced large areas of central Europe to varying degrees (M. Schulze 1984; Schulze-Dörlamm 2002). So-called *Pfeilspitze ungarischer Art* (Hungarian-type arrowheads) and occasional burial sites are also associated with these invasions.

A striking example is the Karlburg castle, which was intensively excavated in the 1970s and 1990s. The original Carolingian fortification was constructed with a ditch and a mortared wall. In the Ottonian period, however, the site area was extended and fortified with ramparts of earth and stones 9–10 m wide and several metres high, enclosed by a ditch and lacking a berm (Figure 10.5 (5)). In the subsequent Salian period a mortar wall was added and reinforced with towers (Ettel 2001: 41–42).

Up to this point, the immediate environment of the Frankish castles has been relatively neglected and with it the question of their role in local settlement and in the wider region. Several seasons of excavation at Karlburg near Würzburg, however, have provided the opportunity to conduct a wider investigation, particularly into associated valley settlement (Ettel 2001: 32–33; Ettel 2007). Here, both historical and archaeological research has revealed an interconnected settlement complex, with two castles, the Karlburg castle and the Grainberg on the other side of the River Main, and a valley settlement below
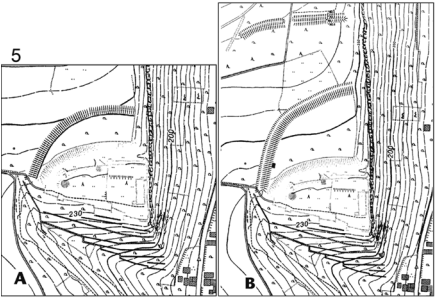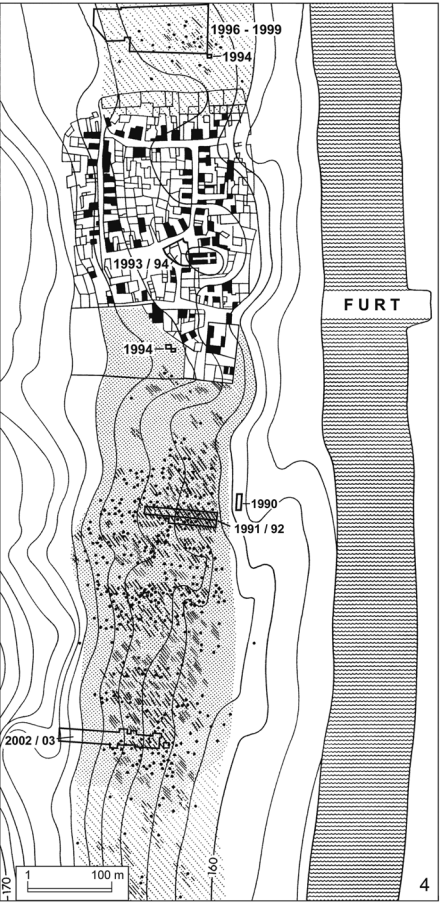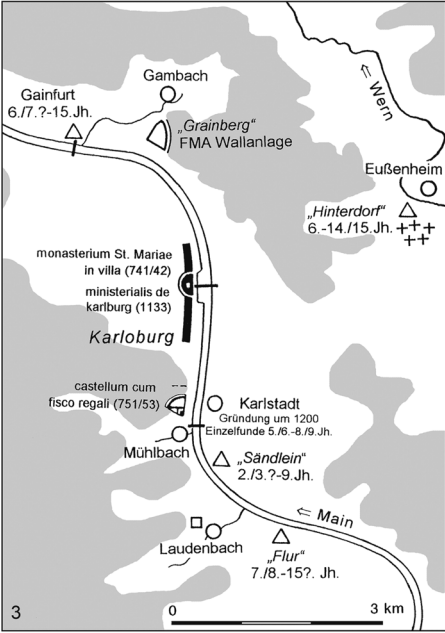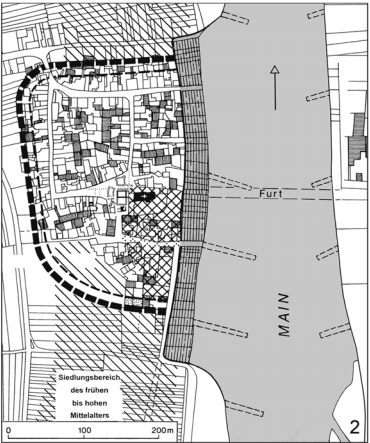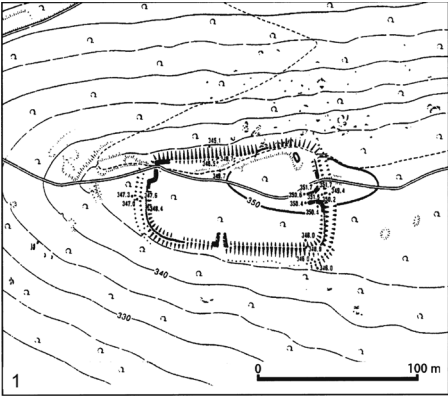
Figure 10.5. (opposite) (1) Topographical plan of the Eiringsburg near Arnhausen. (2) Karlburg: centre of the valley settlement with area of the cloister (cross-hatching), harbour, fortification of the tenth century and ministerialis castle. (3) Archaeological-historical topography of the area of Karlburg with castle and valley settlement. (4) Former extension of the villa Karloburg, evident from the mapping of surface finds, excavated areas 1991–92, 1994, and 1996–99, 2001–07 (ceramics: hatching, metal finds: points). (5) Phases of the Karlburg (*Castellum Karloburg*): A, Carolingian; B, Ottonian. (1) Ettel 2001, fig. 74.4. Reproduced with permission.

the former with a royal estate centre (Königshof) in addition to a monastery and harbour area for landing ships within the heart of the settlement (Figure 10.5 (3)). The valley settlement (Figure 10.5 (4)) developed continuously between the seventh and tenth centuries. In the tenth century the centre of the settlement was fortified with a rampart and ditch enclosing 6 ha (Figure 10.5 (2)), while the site as a whole covered a total of approximately 20 ha, measuring 1 km long by 200 m wide.

The scale of the site suggests that it can be classified as a large early medieval village and permits a comparison with early urban sites. The excavations of the valley settlement revealed areas of postholes relating to dwellings or stables, granaries, and nearly fifty pithouses used for craft or commercial activities, providing evidence for textile production, agriculture, and especially metallurgy. A number of exceptional finds point to the presence of a higher social rank with connections reaching into the Rhine area and Friesland, a situation confirmed historically by the fact that Immina, daughter of Duke Heden of Main-Franconia, lived in the monastery at Karlburg until her death in 750. The valley settlement was important for the supply of the castle or castles with meat and vegetables, textiles, metal products, and many other provisions. The settlement lay outside the fortification because the internal area of Karlburg castle measured only 1.7 ha; a craft settlement within was just not possible.

In the last twenty-five years extensive archaeological investigations more widely have yielded important new information on the interior development and structure of castles, although few castles have yet been extensively excavated. Until 1980 the Büraburg (Figure 10.3 (2)) in Hessen was one of the best known and most important Frankish/Carolingian castles in the Frankish castle area (Wand 1974; Wand 1998). The Büraburg played an important role in the war with the Saxons on the northeast frontier of the Frankish empire. The castle of Büraburg belonged to a Frankish border defence and lay only 45 km away from the Saxon border defence castle of Eresburg. According to written sources (Kurze and Pertz 1895: 36, 38; Streich 1984: 79) Saxon attacks culminated in 774 with the siege of the Büraburg, but the castle held and the Saxons

took to flight. Excavations have shown that the Büraburg was erected in the late seventh century and continued in use until *c.* 850. The castle was built on a mountain spur covering an area of 8 ha (Figures 10.3 (2) and 10.3 (3)). The fortifications were substantial and continually upgraded by state-of-the-art improvements, consisting of two or three phases of mortared walls with towers at the corners, three staggered pointed ditches and three gates. Directly behind the wall twenty-one posthole buildings measuring 7 m × 3 m stood in a continuous line, each comprising two rooms and a fire place, while in the southeast corner large, square dwelling houses were built with a hearth in the centre or one corner.

The castle served more than a purely military function as in 741/2 St Boniface founded an bishopric there (Peeck 1952). A stone-built church 24 m × 9 m stood in the centre of the castle at its highest point which can perhaps be identified with the Brigidenkirche of the same date. A monastery with cloisters and an extended complex of buildings comprising a convent and possibly a baptistery has been taken as evidence of an early Carolingian mission centre to the east of the Rhine (Thiedmann 2006).

The development of castles in the Ottonian period, however, could take a different course, as we can see on the top of the Pfingstberg near Tilleda (Figure 10.3 (4)) in Saxony-Anhalt at the northern edge of the Kyffhäuser mountain (Grimm 1968; Grimm 1990; Eberhardt and Grimm 2001). A Frankish fortified courtyard had already been erected for military purposes in the eighth century, and, after Henry I became king of the Germans in 919, it was developed as his imperial palace, and the core area of the Liudolfinger became the centre of the Holy Roman empire. The first documentary reference to Tilleda is from 972, when Emperor Otto II donated Tilleda to his wife Theophanu. A ruler stayed there in 974, and from that time up to 1042 six further visits followed.

The imperial palace is divided into a main castle on the eastern side covering 1 ha in which the buildings are grouped around an inner courtyard, and a two-part, later three-part, bailey of 4 ha to the south and west (Figure 10.3 (4) and 10.5). The main castle underwent three phases of construction until it was abandoned in 1200, when it consisted of several buildings with stone foundations: a palatine chapel, aula, and the king's residential area. The two-part bailey shows an intensive interior development with approximately two hundred pithouses. The southern bailey is characterized by pithouses and post-built dwellings which could have served as storage barns, while in the western bailey excavations uncovered several guardhouses, granaries, weaving rooms, and numerous other structures bearing evidence of craft production, including ivory and bone items, metal objects, pottery, and iron working. The imperial

palace at Tilleda was therefore concentrated on the Pfingstberg, whose most important elements — palace/aula, palatine chapel, stores, crafts area — were protected by a multipart fortification. The site is a classic example of a typical tenth-century fortified imperial palace established at the top of a mountain. This is a new development in relation to the imperial palaces of the eighth and ninth centuries, which were usually unfortified (Gauert 1965).

The large castle of Roßtal (Figure 10.4 (1)) covered nearly six hectares and can be compared with the imperial palaces. A single reference to the site in written sources concerns a battle on 17 June 954, when it successfully resisted a siege by Otto I. Archaeological investigations have revealed that the castle already existed in Carolingian times and might have been constructed around 800 (Schwarz 1975: 338–409; Ettel 2001: 100–101; Ettel 1998a: 127–136). The fortification of the Carolingian castle consisted of a wood-earth-stone construction with a dry stone wall, berm, and a V-shaped ditch (Figure 10.3 (1b)). In the first half of the tenth century the fortification was strengthened with a one-metre-thick mortared wall in front of the dry stone wall. A tower and a further ditch were added at a particularly vulnerable point in the plateau.

The whole of the interior of the castle was already used in the Carolingian period and was a well structured space (Figure 10.4 (1–3)). Excavations revealed a functional arrangement of the interior with dwelling quarters and areas relating to craft production with pit houses, work pits, and a workshop for the treatment of antlers. Radial fences divided the southwest area into three functional units or parcels with haylofts or houses, stores, and perhaps stables or barns. These areas were developed over an extended period in at least three phases until being abandoned in the second half of the tenth century.

The castle at Sulzbach Rosenberg (Figure 10.4 (5–6)) in the Upper Palatinate (Oberpfalz) has recently been excavated and represents an important example of an early medieval castle with administrative buildings. The excavations also revealed traces of timber construction predating the first stone-phase (Hensch 2005). The earliest stone constructions were a building *c.* 15 m × 7.50 m with a relatively substantial semicircular apse to the east, a ninth-century Carolingian chapel, and a great hall dating to the late tenth century constructed of two-shell masonry. The hall was 16 m long and contained a central fireplace dating to the late tenth century. Further finds such as window grates, partly painted in the shape of letters, give a picture of a superior culture, as does a heated dwelling house 6.50 m wide and a further stone building 11 m wide; these were abandoned in the early eleventh century, whereas the hall remained in use until the twelfth century. Extravagantly constructed graves were revealed in the external area of the castle church, and from that Hensch, the excavator, concluded

that the castle — with its size of 4.2 ha including the bailey — could have been the seat of the earls of the northern Bavarian region, and that the earls of Schweinfurt had resided here as royal governors (Hensch 2005).

Considering only the size of fortifications, the early medieval castles discussed here can be divided into three types (Gensen 1975: 313–14; Ettel 2001: 208–09):

1. Castles of over 3 ha often with multipart fortification systems; including imperial palaces and large castles with craft production areas such as Roßtal (Figure 10.4 (1)). These castles surely had central-place functions.

2. Castles of between 1–3 ha, such as Karlburg (Figure 10.5 (5)).

3. A third group characterized by small fortifications of up to 1 ha in size. In addition to those traditionally designed with sectional or circular walls, these small castles can have a geometrical form. Eiringsburg (Figure 10.5 (1)) on the Frankish Saale belongs to this group: armed with typical plier gates, it lies on a mountain spur with a rectangular form of 120 m × 65 m (Hock 1936; the excavation of 1974 is unpublished; Schwarz 1975: 338–39, 389; see also the earliest phase of Castell: Ettel 1998b).

Group 1 and 2 castles were built between the seventh and tenth centuries, while those in group 3 are known from the early ninth century and seem to appear first in Hesse (Gensen 1975: 331–32. fig. 15: e.g. Rickelskopf, Burg bei Caldern; Schwarz 1975: 389–90. Schäftlarn-Mühltal, Ebersberg, older Babenberger, Janssen 1983; Ettel 2006, summarizing Böhme 2006; Böhme and Friedrich 2008). Type 3 castles are unlikely to have served important political functions but instead were erected for the protection of noble families and perhaps adjacent valley settlements and their possessions. These castles and the Sulzbach-Rosenberg type characterize both castle types of the early medieval period, and they frequently developed further in the later medieval period into the different forms of castles of the aristocracy, both in lowlands and mountainous areas.

I now turn to a description of Slavic castle construction, with reference both to common features and differences with Frankish castle building. Exactly when the Slavs began to build castles is a question which has been raised in the light of recent dendrochronological dating. As a result of this it has been determined that many Slavic castles were constructed two hundred years later than previously assumed (Henning and Heußner 1992; Brather 2001): not in the sixth or early seventh centuries but in the late seventh/early eighth century at the earliest in the Mecklenburg area and for the most part only in the ninth and tenth

centuries. This has consequences for the historical study of Frankish and Slavic cultures which are far from resolved by current research. Comparisons between Frankish and Slavic castle building have been placed on a completely new footing demanding revision of past models and theories, for example the mutual influence between the two, the development of large castles, and in particular of the smaller castle. There is also the question of whether the beginning of the Slavic castle building is a reaction to the Frankish and/or Saxon building of castles.

Slavic castle building (Figure 10.6) comprises circular walls and occasionally sectional barriers of earth and timber (Herrmann and Coblenz 1974; Kempke 1999; Herrmann 2002; Donat 2002: 352). In the central German mountain range castles were built on summits with dry stone walls, so that the distinction between Frankish-German and Slavic constructions, particularly in the border area, is difficult to determine, which has led to controversial interpretations. The type of castle changes with the topography as one goes east and more particularly north into the lowlands, where castles are situated on elevated areas or hills alongside streams and rivers, or on islands or peninsulas in lakes or marshes. For these latter reasons the foundations of the walls as well as the houses themselves are often found in a waterlogged and airtight environment which offers ideal conditions for the preservation of organic materials such as wood, bone, leather, or textiles and thus for scientific investigation such as dendrochronology.

Wood thus played a dominant role as a building material in the Slavic area from the seventh to the twelfth/thirteenth centuries and was used for the building of houses as well as fortifications, roads, and bridges (Herrmann 1989a; Herrmann 1989b: 312–13). Walls were usually built from wood and earth, stones only being used sporadically in the foundations. Fortifications (Figure 10.6 (1)) were sometimes simple structures of earthen ramparts and simple walls, although they could also be more complex, based on a gridiron construction with trunks of wood layered parallel and transverse to the wall, often with wooden boxes of 2 m–4 m in length filled with earth, wood, sand, or clay depending on availability (Herrmann 1989b: 328; for reconstruction of the kinds of fortifications, Kempke 1999). Such boxes were set together one above the other, so that two- or three-part walls could be erected with a base width of 5 m–15 m and a height of up to 10 m. These constructions were supplemented by ditches, usually with a U-shaped section, and less often by V-shaped ditches and gates, while towers at gates or elsewhere are rare. The size of castles ranges from 50 m in diameter (smaller ones) up to 80–100 m (larger ones) as at the Groß Raden (Figure 10.6 (2–3)) in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

Starigard near Oldenburg in Schleswig-Holstein (Figure 10.6 (4–5)) represents one of the most important castles of the Wagrians, a tribe of the
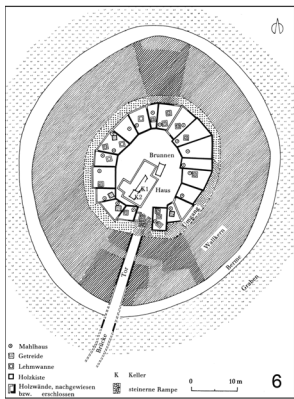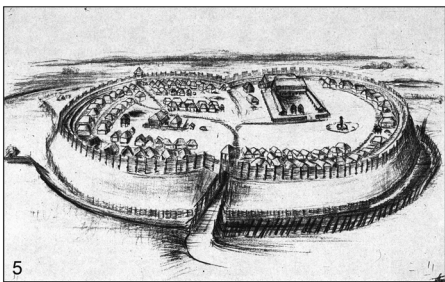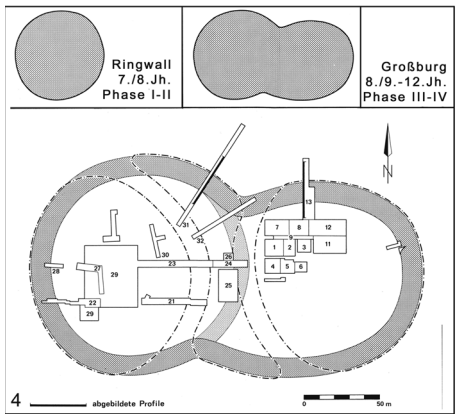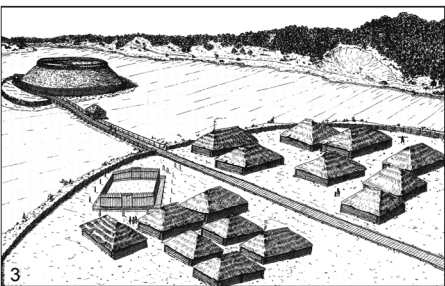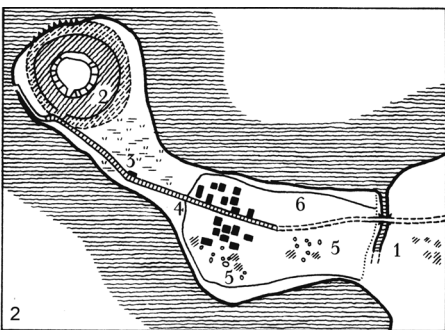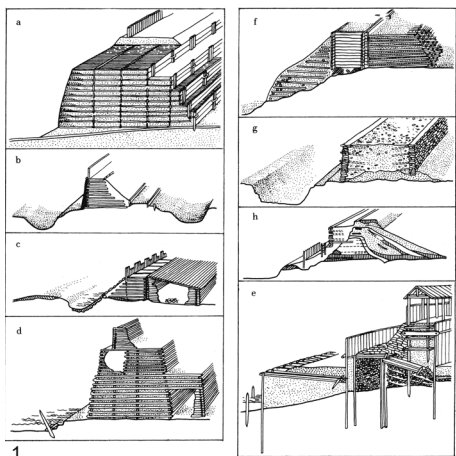
Figure 10.6. (opposite) (1) Types of fortifications with wood, earth, and dry stone walls (different scales): a) Mecklenburg; b) Brandenburg; c) Feldberg; d) Tornow; e) Behren-Lübchin; f) Teterow; g) Jena-Lobeda; h) Cösitz. (2) Groß Raden: schematized plan of the Slavic settlement from the tenth/eleventh century. (3) Groß Raden: reconstruction of the Slavic castle and its settlement. (4) Starigard/Oldenburg: topography of the castle: above phase I–II and phase III–IV, down the early medieval fortification and the excavated areas. (5) Starigard/Oldenburg: reconstruction of the castle (beginning of the ninth century). (6) Tornow: reconstruction of castle and settlement. (7) Tornow: plan of the eighth-/ninth-century phase. (1) Herrmann 1989b: 328. (2) Herrmann 1989b: 321. (3) Menghin and Planck 2002: 354, fig. 10. (4) Toločko 1991: 107, fig. 3. (5) Toločko 1991: 120, fig. 12. (6) Herrmann 1989b: 319, fig. (7) Brather 2006: 63, fig. 18. Reproduced with permission.

Obodrite confederacy. It was the seat of the prince and temporarily of the grand duke before being destroyed by the Danes in 1148/9. Excavations carried out between 1953 and 1986 encompassed both the fortification and the residential zone including representative buildings, churches with a royal burial ground, and a cult area (Müller-Wille 1991, with several contributions to special topics). The castle of the seventh to eighth centuries measured 1.5 ha, with a 140 m diameter ring-wall, consisting of a 6 m wide wood-earth barrier of box construction with planking on the inner side. At the end of the eighth century, the fortress was rebuilt as a large oval castle with a size of 3.3 ha, the fortification was erected in homogeneous construction and repaired several times up to the mid-twelfth century by which time the width of the base was at least 20 m.

Excavations in the interior of Starigard revealed intense development, mainly comprising one- and two-roomed loghouses measuring *c.* 5 m × 18 m equipped with domed ovens (*Lehmkuppelofen*). Houses with foundation beams and wattle walls are known from the tenth century. In the eastern part of the site, in the main castle area, was a complex reminiscent of an imperial palace, with a large princely hall of 22 m × 8.6 m in size, large dwellings, and granaries, residential and storage buildings as well as various shops, for example a fine metalworker. The princely hall was rebuilt twice after fires and then, in 935, a large building, probably a patronal church, was erected in its place, which is associated with princely burials with rich grave goods. During the period of the Oldenburger diocese (972–83) a second phase of the church was built with further graves, until finally, in 983 during the revolt of the tribe of Liutizians, the castle was demolished by fire. Afterwards, a cult area was built with a stone base where horse heads were ritually deposited. The various finds from this later phase attest a local fine smith, a comb workshop, and courtly handicrafts. International relations oriented towards the Carolingian court are reflected in

dinner sets including a Tatinger wine pitcher and bottle glass, in addition to Carolingian sword-belts and belt fittings and equestrian accessories.

A castle of a completely different nature is Groß Raden (Figure 10.6 (2–3)) in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, which is situated on a peninsula (Schuldt 1976; Schuldt 1978 and Schuldt 1985; Voß 2002). According to ceramics and dendrochronology, the complex with castle and bailey dates to the ninth and tenth century with two phases. The settlement area was formerly divided into island and peninsula, the latter separated from the mainland by a fifty-metre-long ditch with a U-shaped profile protected with a palisade. A path of oak planks led across the settlement on the peninsula, with houses of different constructions along both sides. In the earlier phase this area was occupied with houses measuring 4 m × 5 m with wattle walls and with hearths. Outside the houses were domed ovens. In the later phase, probably after a destruction of around 900, thirty to forty houses with a floor area up to 45 m², some with two rooms, were built. A cult place measuring 7 m × 11 m with a double-row plank wall, possibly a cult-hall, belonged to the older phase.

A planked trackway, 100 m long and 3 m wide, connected the peninsula with the island. On the island in the earlier settlement phase, houses with wattle walls also stood.

In the tenth century a circular castle was erected with a tunnel gate on the island; the fortification shows three phases. The interior was very limited in size with a diameter of 25 m. Inside the wall granaries and dwellings up to 20 m² were found. In the yard were several pits, and in the centre a 3.2 m wide and 1.6 m deep posthole, possibly marking the former position of an idol. In the later phase, the cult place may have been transferred from the peninsula on the island into the castle. Groß Raden was interpreted in the older literature as a typical temple-castle (Schuldt 1976). In connection with a campaign of Otto III in 995, Groß Raden was finally abandoned.

The castle at Tornow, near Cottbus in Brandenburg (Figure 10.6 (6–7)) encloses an area of 0.4 ha and is comparable in size with Groß Raden. Nineteen two-storeyed buildings, especially for grain, were built on the wall of the castle (Herrmann 1973; Herrmann 1989a: 654–55; Domanski 1998; Brather 2006). Dendrochronological dates obtained after 1990 from comparable fortifications in Lower Lusatia demonstrate in addition to other archaeological finds that the erection of Tornow and castles of this type 'small ring walls' date particularly to the second half of the ninth century. Possibly, they represent a reaction to Ottonian 'east politics of expansion'. This situation corresponds with conditions in the west Frankish area of castle building with the earliest examples developing in the ninth/tenth centuries.

Finally, I wish to draw the attention to the function of the early medieval castles with regard to their culture-historical background and socio-political power structures. The few historical sources reveal very little with individual castles mentioned only incidentally in the given source. Only through the comparative assessment of early medieval castles can insights be gained regarding individual sites, and to some extent, about their rulers, their environment, and their past functions (Ettel 2001: 195–96; Böhme 2006: 386–87)

It is evident in both the Frankish and Slavic castle regions that such sites had to fulfil not one but usually several functions. This applies particularly to the large castles which were certainly multifunctional. Castles surely functioned as places of refuge (Kurze and Pertz 1895; Streich 1984: 79; Fehring 1972 for Unterregenbach); contrary to early opinions, however, this was not their primary function. Modern excavations of castles usually reveal numerous finds of domestic rubbish and other materials that attest their use over an extended period, even continuously, thus they were not used only in situations of emergency. The military function of the Frankish and Saxon castles is without doubt. This is apparent in the Frankish-Saxon border region with the Saxonia wars of Charlemagne and in the Carolingian campaigns against the Slavs (Langen 1989; Brachmann 1985; Gockel 1992: 49–56). Castles did not remain limited to military function, however. An economic role can be seen in the excavated craft areas, in particular those in the large castles and the imperial palaces, which were surely of central importance for commercial production, marketing, and traffic of a region (Schlesinger 1963; Grimm 1990 for Tilleda). Surely the function of controlling regional traffic must have been important. Beyond such practical concerns, a sacral function of many castles is demonstrated by cult sites and the building of churches, in addition to episcopate castles which were church centres and, in some cases, bishop seats (Streich 1984).

Military, sacral, and economic functions are surely connected with political and administrative functions, which are barely recognizable in the archaeological record but suggested in written sources. Castles are mentioned, for example, as places of issuance of documents, collecting points of taxes, and thus as centres of administration and lordship (Ettel 2001: 195–96; Brachmann 1993: 80–81; H. Schulze 1984: 32). In addition, the geographical distribution of castles in the individual castle regions, such as Bavaria, Central Germany, and likewise in the Slavic castle area shows that the larger castles especially were not placed close to border but were instead centrally placed political and administrative entities. Finds of high-status materials, the interior development of castles with palatial buildings, heating systems and other equipment, and complex grave constructions demonstrate that certain castles were seats of sovereigns, aris-

tocracy, and clergy. The castle represented as much of an instrument of royal, aristocratic, or ecclesiastical power in the Frankish region, as for tribal chieftains and their followers in the Slavic area. This situation began in the seventh century and continued until the tenth/eleventh centuries and later, particular in the Slavic area. Furthermore, due to their strategic topographical locations, castles always symbolized power.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Kurze, Friedrich, and Georg Heinrich Pertz (eds). 1895. *Annales regni Francorum inde ab a. 741 usque ad a. 829, qui dicuntur Annales Laurissenses maiores et Einhardi*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*, 78 vols (Hannover, 1871–), ɪᴠ (repr. 1950)
Peeck, Friedel (ed.). 1952. *Die Reinhardsbrunner Briefsammlung* (München, repr. 1985)

Secondary Studies

Abels, Björn-Uwe. 1979. *Die vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Geländedenkmäler Unterfrankens*, Materialhefte zur Bayerischen Vorgeschichte, 6 (Kallmünz)
Böhme, Horst Wolfgang. 2006. 'Burgen der Salierzeit: von den Anfängen adligen Burgenbaus bis ins 11./12. Jahrhundert', in *Vom Umbruch zur Erneuerung? Das 11. und beginnende 12. Jahrhundert: Positionen der Forschung*, ed. by Jörg Jarnut and Matthias Wemhoff, Mittelalter Studien, 13 (München), pp. 379–401
Böhme, Horst Wolfgang, Busso von der Dollen, and Dieter Kerber. 1999. *Burgen in Mitteleuropa: ein Handbuch*, 2 vols (Stuttgart)
Böhme, Horst Wolfgang, and Reinhard Friedrich. 2008. 'Zum Stand der hochmittelalterlichen Burgenforschung in West- und Süddeutschland', *Château Gaillard*, 23, 44–60
Brachmann, Hansjürgen. 1985. 'Die sächsisch-fränkischen Auseinandersetzungen des 8. Jahrhunderts im Spiegel des Befestigungsbaues', *Zeitschrift für Archäologie*, 19, 213–24
——, 1988. 'Zur Herkunft und Verbreitung von Trocken- und Mörtelmauerwerk im frühmittelalterlichen Befestigungsbau Mitteleuropas', *Studia nad etnogeneza Slowian i kultura Europy wczesnosredniobowiecznej*, 1, 199–215
——, 1993. *Der frühmittelalterliche Befestigungsbau in Mitteleuropa: Untersuchungen zu seiner Entwicklung und Funktion im germanisch-deutschen Gebiet*, Schriften zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte, 45 (Berlin)
Brather, Sebastian. 2001. 'Archäologie der westlichen Slawen: Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Ostmitteleuropa', in *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. by Heinrich Beck and others, 35 vols (Berlin, 1973–2008), xxx: *Stil-Tissø*, pp. 119–40

——, 2006. 'Tornow', in *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. by Heinrich Beck and others, 35 vols (Berlin, 1973–2008), XXXI: *Tiszalök–Vadomarius*, pp. 61–66

Domanski, Grzegorz. 1998. 'Tornow und Jazów: zwei Siedlungskomplexe der Luboszyce-Kultur', in *Haus und Hof im östlichen Germanien*, ed. by Achim Leube, Universitäts-forschungen zur prähistorischen Archäologie, 50 (Bonn), pp. 217–25

Donat, Peter. 2002. 'Geschützt durch Holz und Wasser: die Burgen der Slawen', in *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume: Archäologie und Geschichte in Deutschland*, ed. by Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck (Stuttgart), pp. 352–56

Eberhardt, Hans, and Paul Grimm. 2001. *Die Pfalz Tilleda am Kyffhäuser: ein Führer durch Geschichte und Ausgrabung* (Halle)

Ettel, Peter 1998a. 'Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen auf der Burg Horsadal, Roßtal bei Nürnberg', in *Frühmittelalterlicher Burgenbau in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, ed. by Joachim Henning and Alexander T. Ruttkay (Bonn), pp. 127–36

——, 1998b. 'Die Burgen zu Castell und ihre Bewertung im Rahmen des frühmittelalterlichen Burgenbaus in Nordbayern', in *Das Land zwischen Main und Steigerwald im Mittelalter*, ed. by Alfred Wendehorst, Erlanger Forschungen, 47 (Erlangen), pp. 99–146

——, 2001. *Karlburg – Roßtal – Oberammerthal: Studien zum frühmittelalterlichen Burgenbau in Nordbayern*, Frühgeschichtliche und provinzialrömische Archäologie, Materialien und Forschungen, 5 (Rahden)

——, 2006. 'Frühmittelalterlicher Burgenbau in Nordbayern und die Entwicklung der Adelsburg', in *Neue Forschungen zum frühen Burgenbau*, Forschungen zu Burgen und Schlössern, 9 (München), pp. 33–48

——, 2007. 'Karlburg on Main (Bavaria) and its Functions as a Local Centre from Late Merovingian through Ottonian Times', in *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium*, ed. by Joachim Henning, Millenium-Studien, 5, 2 vols (Berlin), I: *The Heirs of the Roman West*, pp. 319–40

——, 2008. 'Frühmittelalterliche Burgen in Deutschland: zum Stand der Forschung', *Château Gaillard*, 23, 161–86

Fehring, Günter P. 1972. *Unterregenbach: Kirchen, Herrensitz, Siedlungsbereiche* (Stuttgart)

Freeden, Uta von, and Siegmar von Schnurbein (eds). 2002. *Spuren der Jahrtausende: Archäologie in Deutschland* (Stuttgart)

Gauert, Adolf. 1965. 'Zur Struktur und Topographie der Königspfalzen', in *Deutsche Königspfalzen: Beiträge zu ihrer historischen und archäologischen Erforschung*, ed. by Adolf Gauert, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 11, 4 vols (Göttingen), II, 1–60

Gensen, Rolf. 1975. 'Frühmittelalterliche Burgen und Siedlungen in Nordhessen', in *Ausgrabungen in Deutschland: gefördert von der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft, 1950–1975*, Monographien des Romisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseums, 4 vols (Mainz), II: *Römische Kaiserzeit im Freien Germanien, Frümittelalter*, pp. 313–37

Gockel, Michael. 1992. 'Die Westausdehnung Thüringens im frühen Mittelalter im Lichte der Schriftquellen', in *Aspekte thüringisch-hessischer Geschichte*, ed. by Michael Gockel (Marburg), pp. 49–66

Grimm, Paul. 1968. *Die Hauptburg*, in *Tilleda, eine Königspfalz am Kyffhäuser*, Schriften der Sektion für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 24, 40, 2 vols (Berlin, 1968–90), I

—— , 1990. *Die Vorburg und Zusammenfassung*, in *Tilleda, eine Königspfalz am Kyffhäuser*, Schriften der Sektion für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 24, 40, 2 vols (Berlin, 1968–90), II

Heine, Hans-Wilhelm. 2008. 'Mittelalterliche Burgen in Niedersachsen und seinen Nachbarregionen: Rückblick auf 25 Jahre archäologische Forschung', *Château Gaillard*, 23, 211–24

—— (ed.). 2007. *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium*, Millenium-Studien, 5, 2 vols (Berlin)

Henning, Joachim, and K.-U. Heußner. 1992. 'Zur Burgengeschichte im 10. Jahrhundert: neue archäologische und dendrochronologische Daten zu Anlagen vom Typ Tornow', *Ausgrabungen und Funde*, 37, 314–24

Hensch, Mathias. 2005. *Burg Sulzbach in der Oberpfalz: archäologisch-historische Forschungen zur Entwicklung eines Herrschaftszentrums des 8. bis 14. Jahrhunderts in Nordbayern* (Büchenbach)

Herrmann, Joachim. 1973. *Die germanischen und slawischen Siedlungen und das mittelalterliche Dorf von Tornow, Kreis Calau* (Berlin)

—— (ed.). 1989a. *Archäologie in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, 2 vols (Leipzig)

—— , 1989b. 'Siedlungen und Burgen der slawischen Stämmen', in *Archäologie in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, ed. by Joachim Herrmann, 2 vols (Leipzig), I, 312–29

—— , 2002. 'Burgen, Handel, Heidentum: Slawische Frühgeschichte', in *Menschen – Zeiten – Räume: Archäologie und Geschichte in Deutschland*, ed. by Wilfried Menghin and Dieter Planck (Stuttgart), pp. 343–45

Herrmann, Joachim, and W. Coblenz. 1974. 'Burgen und Befestigungen', in *Die Slawen in Deutschland. Geschichte und Kultur der Slawischen stamme Westlich von Oder und Neisse vom 6. bis 12. Jahrhundert: ein Handbuch*, ed. by Joachim Herrmann (Berlin), pp. 147–86

Hock, Georg. 1936. 'Die Eiringsburg bei Bad Kissingen', *Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter*, 13, 73–87

Janssen, Walter. 1983. 'Die Bedeutung der mittelalterlichen Burg für die Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte', in *Das Handwerk in vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Zeit: Bericht über die Kolloquien der Kommission für die Alterumskunde Mittle- und Nordeuropas in den Jahren 1977 bis 1980*, ed. by Herbert Jankuhn and others, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, 3.F, 122–23, 2 vols (Göttingen, 1981–83), II: *Archäologische und philologische Beiträge*, pp. 317–94

Kempke, Torsten. 1999. 'Slawische Burgen des 7.-10. Jahrhunderts', in *Burgen in Mitteleuropa: ein Handbuch*, ed. by Horst Wolfgang Böhme, Busso von der Dollen, and Dieter Kerber, 2 vols (Stuttgart), I: *Bauformen u. Entwicklung*, pp. 45–53

—— , 2002. 'Burgwälle des 8. bis 12. Jahrhundert zwischen Elbe und Oder', in *Europas Mitte um 1000: Beiträge zur Geschichte, Kunst und Archäologie*, ed. by Alfried von Wieczorek and Hans-Martin Hinz, 3 vols (Stuttgart), I, 270–73

Langen, Ruth. 1989. 'Die Bedeutung von Befestigungen in den Sachsenkriegen Karls des Großen', *Westfälische Zeitschrift*, 139, 181–212

Menghin, Wilfried, and Dieter Planck (eds). 2002. *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume: Archäologie und Geschichte in Deutschland* (Stuttgart)

Müller-Wille, Michael (ed.). 1991. *Starigard,Oldenburg: ein slawischer Herrschersitz des frühen Mittelalters in Ostholstein* (Neumünster)

Quarthal, Franz (ed.). 1984. *Alemannien und Ostfranken im Frühmittelalter*, Veröffentlichung des Alemannischen Instituts Freiburg im Breisgau, 48 (Bühl)

Sage, Walter. 1990. 'Auswirkungen der Ungarnkriege in Altbayern und ihr archäologischer Nachweis', *Aventinum, Stiftung für Altbayern*, 4, 5–35

Schlesinger, Walter. 1963. 'Burg und Stadt', in *Beiträge zur deutschen Verfassungs- und Landesgeschichte des Mittelalters*, ed. by Walter Schlesinger, 2 vols (Göttingen), II: *Städte und Territorien*, pp. 92–147

Schuldt, Ewald. 1976. *Der altslawische Tempel von Groß Raden*, Bildkataloge des Museums für Ur- und Frühgeschichte Schwerin, 19 (Schwerin)

——, 1978. *Burg und Siedlungen von Groß Raden*, Bildkataloge des Museums für Ur- und Frühgeschichte Schwerin, 21 (Schwerin)

——, 1985. *Ein slawischer-Tempelort des 9./10. Jahrhunderts in Mecklenburg*, Schriften zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte, 39 (Berlin)

Schulze, Hans K. 1984. 'Ostfranken und Alemannien in der Politik des fränkischen Reiches', in *Alemannien und Ostfranken im Frühmittelalter*, ed. by Franz Quarthal, Veröffentlichung des Alemannischen Instituts Freiburg im Breisgau, 48 (Bühl), pp. 13–38

Schulze, Mechthild. 1984. 'Das ungarische Kriegergrab von Aspres-lès-Corps. Untersuchungen zu den Ungarneinfällen nach Mittel-, West- und Südeuropa (899–955 n.Chr.) mit einem Exkurs zur Münzchronologie altungarischer Gräber', *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz*, 31, 487–514

Schulze-Dörlamm, Mechthild. 2002. 'Die Ungarneinfälle des 10. Jahrhunderts im Spiegel archäologischer Funde', in *Europa im 10. Jahrhundert: Archäologie einer Aufbruchszeit*, ed. by Joachim Henning (Mainz), pp. 109–22

Schwarz, Klaus. 1972. 'Die Birg bei Schäftlarn', *Führer zu vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Denkmälern*, 18, 222–38

——, 1975. 'Der frühmittelalterliche Landesausbau in Nordost-Bayern archäologisch gesehen', in *Ausgrabungen in Deutschland: gefördert von der Deutchen Forschungsgemeinschaft, 1950–1975*, Monographien des Romisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseums, 4 vols (Mainz), II: *Römische Kaiserzeit im Freien Germanien, Frühmittelalter*, pp. 338–409

Steuer, Heiko. 1990. 'Höhensiedlungen des 4. u. 5. Jh. in Südwestdeutschland: Einordnung des Zähringer Burgberges, Gem. Gundelfingen, Kr.Breisgau-Hochschwarzwald', in *Archäologie und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausend in Südwestdeutschland*, ed. by K. Schmid and others, Archäologie und Geschichte, 1 (Sigmaringen), pp. 139–206

——, 1997. 'Herrschaft von der Höhe', in *Die Alamannen*, ed. by Archäologisches Landesmuseum (Stuttgart), pp. 149–62

——, 2005. 'Die Alamannia und die alamannische Besiedlung des rechtsrheinischen Hinterlandes', in *Imperium Romanum: Römer, Christen, Alamannen: Die Spätantike am Oberrhein*, ed. by Archäologisches Landesmuseum (Stuttgart), 2005, pp. 26–41

Streich, Gerhard. 1984. *Burg und Kirche während des deutschen Mittelalters: Untersuchungen zur Sakraltopographie von Pfalz- und Burgkapellen bis zur staufischen Zeit*, Vorträge und Forschungen, 29 (Sigmaringen)

Thiedmann, Andreas. 2006. 'Knochen und rätselhafte Mauern', *Archäologie in Deutschland*, 3, 45–46

Toločko, Petr P. 1991. 'Der Burgwall Starigard/Oldenburg und das slawische Befestigungswesen', in *Starigard, Oldenburg: ein slawischer Herrschersitz des frühen Mittelalters in Ostholstein*, ed. by Michael Müller-Wille (Neumünster), pp. 103–22

Uslar, Rafael von. 1964. *Studien zu frühgeschichtlichen Befestigungen zwischen Nordsee und Alpen* (Köln)

Voß, Rolf. 2002. 'Der altslawische Tempelort Groß Raden in Mecklenburg', in *Europas Mitte um 1000: Beiträge zur Geschichte, Kunst und Archäologie*, ed. by Alfried von Wieczorek and Hans-Martin Hinz, 3 vols (Stuttgart), I, 252–56

Wamser, Ludwig. 1986. 'Zur Bedeutung des Schwanberges im frühen und hohen Mittelalter', in *Aus Frankens Frühzeit: Festgabe für Peter Endrich*, ed. by Ludwig Wamser, Mainfränkische Studien, 37 (Würzburg), pp. 164–92

Wand, Norbert. 1974. *Die Büraburg bei Fritzlar: Burg, "Oppidum" Bischofssitz in karolingischer Zeit* (Marburg)

——, 1998. 'Die Büraburg bei Fritzlar — eine fränkische Reichsburg mit Bischofssitz in Hessen', in *Frühmittelalterlicher Burgenbau in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, ed. by Joachim Henning and Alexander T. Ruttkay (Bonn), pp. 175–88

Werner, Joachim. 1965. 'Zu den alamannischen Burgen des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts', in *Speculum Historiale*, ed. by Clemens Bauer (Freiburg), pp. 439–53

The Viking Age Paradox: Continuity and Discontinuity of Fortifications and Defence Works in Eastern Scandinavia

Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson,
Lena Holmquist, and Michael Olausson*

The Viking Age proves complex when viewed from a military historical perspective. There is inconsistency in the correlation between home and abroad and between literary sources and archaeological remains. The break in continuity from fortification traditions of earlier periods represents a change in the societal structure where individuals become landowners, and there is both the will and the strength to dominate territories. This essay focuses on the continuity and discontinuity of fortifications in eastern Scandinavia in an attempt to understand the paradox of the Viking Age landscape of defence.

Introduction

In 1998 the project *Strongholds and Fortifications in Central Sweden, AD 400–1100* was launched with the objective to study fortifications and defensive structures from the late Iron Age into the early Middle Ages. The aim of the

Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson is Researcher at Statens Historiska museum, Stockholms universitet. **Lena Holmquist** is Assistant Professor at Arkeologiska forskningslaboratoriet, Stockholms universitet. **Michael Olausson** is Curator and Researcher at Länsstyrelsen, Stockholm.

project was to acknowledge the possibilities of archaeology to illustrate violence and society in a time span beginning with the Migration Period and ending at the start of the Scandinavian Middle Ages. Armed conflicts are considered one of the most important factors in the reformations and societal changes that led to early state formation and nation building in the period AD 400–1100 (cf. Halsall 2003). The source material consists of different types of fortifications, weaponry, and a martial material culture. Fortifications and defence works are seen through aspects of social politics, military technology, and architecture; one of the main goals of the project being to identify fortifications preceding medieval castles.

Few archaeological remains reflect the political and social development in Sweden as evidently as the enclosures of the fourth to sixth centuries. The following period of the Viking Age up to the point where castles and fortresses were built is on the other hand much more elusive and difficult to interpret. The lack of visible defensive structures during the Viking Age could falsely be interpreted as signs of a less violent time with relatively peaceful societies. As we all know from a range of other sources, this was not the case. The late Iron Age and early medieval period was a violent one when warfare took on a new scale. The literary sources mention the skills of Scandinavian warriors in both constructing and using fortifications and defensive structures in their warfare. Visible archaeological evidence in Scandinavian territory, however, is sparse, making the Viking Age landscape of defence a paradox.

Hilltop Sites: The Dwellings of the Elite

To fully appreciate the Viking Age break or discontinuity in defence-work tradition we must begin in the preceding period — the hilltop site era. The Swedish term for fortification — *fornborg*, meaning ancient fort — is an antiquarian term firmly rooted in general vocabulary and generally translated to hill-fort. More recent research, including the *Strongholds and Fortifications* project, has shown that the term 'hill-fort' includes many different types of structure with varying functions, and dating from the Bronze Age into the Vendel Period (Merovingian times). In central Sweden there are over a thousand known forts, but it is important to note that the presence of a rampart or wall does not necessarily indicate military or defensive connotations. Instead, defences could denote other central place functions, as social, judicial, or religious statements directed towards the surrounding society. Only a minor part of the enclosures represent actual fortifications. Late Roman Iron Age and Migration Period for-

tifications can be defined as manifest ramparts built so that the topographical prerequisites — watercourses, precipices, and cliffs — are used to their full extent. Notable is the great number of enclosures erected more or less simultaneously over a large geographical area, primarily Sweden and Norway, but in use for only during a remarkably short time period, between the fourth and the beginning of the sixth centuries (Olausson 1995).

The majority of the enclosures were without settlements inside the rampart. Such sites could have functioned as temporary gathering places in times of trouble or as active positions in defence or attack situations but never as refuges for the local population. Forts with settlement remains, mainly in the form of house terraces, constitute a special category. While excavation and research work was conducted in the beginning of the twentieth century, not until now, with the *Strongholds and Fortifications* project, have the results of these studies gained validity. They should be seen as hilltop sites (*Höhensiedlungen*), one in a number of estates belonging to the elite in society. Such fortified manors combined defence, status representation, and housing with advanced crafts including precious metal working and trade. The estates within which they lay were used for both political and religious purposes, the hall buildings representing social power. Similarities to fourth- and fifth-century hilltop sites north of the Limes, for example in the Alamannic area (e.g. Steuer 1997), are evident. In the Swedish mainland the great farms with their hall buildings were relocated to hills and, with particular functions, became part of an elite lifestyle displaying Roman influence.

The *Strongholds and Fortifications* project has shown the diversity in functions and features of the forts and hence ruled out that they represent only military functions. Instead they should be seen as symbolically important features in the landscape, demonstrating military power and authority as well as political and economic power. They were associated with rank, social stratification, and identities, signalling political, ideological, and military dominance (Olausson 2011; cf. Steuer 1990: 128).

The Vendel (Merovingian) Period Anomaly

The Migration Period forts were, with a few exceptions, no longer in use after the first half of the sixth century. Occasionally forts were erected in the seventh century (for example in Östergötland), but these were built in a different technique altogether and were contemporary with fortified elite settlements in Britain such as Tintagel in Cornwall and the Mote of Mark in

Scotland. After the mid-seventh century the use of forts came to an abrupt end in Scandinavia with one exception, Torsburgen on Gotland. The lowland forts on the island of Öland were reused in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in connection with the eastern Crusades during this era, but as such they are unique.

The Invisible Defence? — Entering the Viking Age

As noted in the Introduction, a military historical perspective reveals particular complexity in the Viking Age. The lack of a correlation between activity at home and behaviour abroad and the contrast between the view provided by written sources, such as the Royal Frankish Annals, and archaeological remains presents a paradox. On the one hand the Scandinavians are depicted as skilled in erecting and using fortifications, especially on the Continent. Christiansen (Christiansen 2002: 178) states that the success of Viking warfare, especially on the western routes, was due to three vital components: ships, horses, and spades. On the other hand, archaeological material is sparse and, in Scandinavia, almost non-existent. Apparently there was either no need or inclination to build defensive works when fighting at home, or in order to protect the home region or farm, although there is no doubt that the fighting occurred in the homelands, including the attacking and burning of halls.

The exceptions to this situation are the Danish ring fortresses, such as Trelleborg in western Sjælland. With striking consistency, these fortifications were built according to a geometrical plan, forming an exactly circular fortress with one opening in each of the cardinal points of the compass. Dated by dendrochronology to AD 980–81, they have been ascribed to the rule of King Harald as an expression of his intensification of centralized power (for differing interpretations of the function of the fortresses see Weibull 1974; Olsen, Schmidt, and Roesdahl 1977; Roesdahl 1987; Skaaning 1992).

The Viking Age landscape of defence contains a combination of different defence structures that can be surmised by the presence of pile barricades and place-names signifying royal manors (Boosgård, Husabyar) and farms or villages with names representing warriors of different rank (Rinkeby, Hersby, Karleby, Tegneby) (Brink 1999). Another feature are the great linear ramparts, of which the well-known Danevirke is a striking illustration of Christiansen's statement that spades were one of the Viking warrior's trademarks: horses were probably a necessity when patrolling this lengthy rampart, while the third element, ships, were controlled by pile barricades in water inlets near to settlements as at Hedeby/Haithabu (cf. Kalmring 2010).

Ramparts and Pile Barricades: The Example of Götavirke

The Viking Age landscape of defence displays an ambition to control territories. This type of landscape, consisting of rampart and pile barricades, is visible on the Swedish peninsula of Vikbolandet on the island of Östergötland, where an elaborate system of Migration Period forts was replaced during the Viking Age by an advanced system of pile barricades and earthworks of some magnitude: the rampart of Götavirke. This process coincides with the founding of early estates in the area, a development that during the early Middle Ages resulted in the building of castles, for example at Stegeborg.

The 3.5 km long rampart of Götavirke is a unique monument in the Swedish landscape. Named in the early twentieth century by Oscar Almgren, it was regarded as the equivalent of Danevirke in southern Jutland/northern Germany. Götavirke was at this time considered to be part of a large-scale defensive system, protecting the Götar from the attacking Svear during the late Migration Period and in to the Vendel Period (on the conflict between Svear, Danes, and Götar, see Rimbert: Waitz 1988). The mythical battle of Bråvalla, described in detail in Saxo Grammaticus's twelfth-century chronicle and mentioned in *Beowulf*, was commonly used as an illustration of these conflicts.

The rampart, with a total volume of approximately 35,000 m³ and constructed with moraine and clay from the surrounding area, was partly excavated within the *Strongholds and Fortifications* project (Stjerna 1999; Olausson 2000). In one location the rampart lay on top of a Migration Period settlement, giving a reliable *terminus post quem* dating. The rampart was built at one time without later phases. There are virtually no traces of inner constructions and vague remnants of a palisade. There are no indications of fire or burning. Remains of a moat along the eastern extension suggest that there was a moat along the entire rampart. When constructing the rampart natural topography and geography were clearly taken into account, and by its placing the 10 km route from the Baltic could be blocked and controlled. The rampart was erected in a narrow almost bottle-neck cultural landscape, sealing off a highly productive cultivation area rich in farms and grave fields both contemporary and from the preceding Iron Age period.

Though multi-purpose, it is clear that the rampart and its location in the landscape express a totally new political and geographical way of thinking, compared to the hilltop site tradition of earlier centuries. If the Migration Period enclosures were the monuments of a society with fragmented and more local than regional power, Götavirke expresses the opposite: ambitions and power structures on a totally different scale. To build the extensive rampart

very likely meant confiscating land or possibly that the builder also was the land owner. In its Viking Age context the rampart was a territorial mark against the outer world and a means to control communication, trade, and hostile military movements from the east. At Stegeborg, the rampart was complemented by pile barricades radiocarbon dated to the ninth and tenth centuries (Table 11.1). Using modern terminology, the rampart and the pile barricades represent parts of a 'defence-in-depth' system in a large scale political and military project. The rampart was built during an acute political and military situation in the ninth century, and the scale and short time span indicate that the initiative must be sought in royal power, geographically placed in the centre of Östergötland. The rampart was reactivated during the eleventh century.

Table 11.1. Comparative carbon-14 dates of Viking Age contexts. Table by C. Hedenstierna-Jonson.

Lab no.	Site	Structure	14C-age BP ± stdv 1σ	Cal 1 sigma	Cal 2 sigma
GrN-23668	Stegeborg	Sea barrage	1220 ± 15	775–865 AD	720–790 AD
St 10673	Stegeborg	Sea barrage	1200 ± 75	710–950 AD	680–990 AD
St 10672	Stegeborg	Sea barrage	1145 ± 75	780–990 AD	690–1030 AD
St 10670	Stegeborg	Sea barrage	1110 ± 75	780–1020 AD	710–1040 AD
St 10671	Stegeborg	Sea barrage	1100 ± 75	780–1020 AD	720–1160 AD
GrN-23699	Stegeborg	Sea barrage	905 ± 15	1040–1170 AD	1030–1210 AD
Ua-15396	Götavirke	Wall	1210 ± 50	720–890 AD	680–960 AD
Ua-15395	Götavirke	Wall	1175 ± 55	770–950 AD	710–990 AD
Ua-15659	Götavirke	Dyke	995 ± 65	980–1160 AD	890–1210 AD
Ua-13520	Götavirke	Dyke	920 ± 65	1030–1190 AD	1000–1260 AD
Ua-15658	Götavirke	Dyke	915 ± 55	1030–1190 AD	1010–1250 AD
GrN-24246	Fållnäs	Sea barrage	1170 ± 30	780–940 AD	770–970 AD
GrN-26989	Fållnäs	Sea barrage	970 ± 20	1020–1160 AD	1010–1160 AD
GrN-26990	Fållnäs	Sea barrage	940 ± 20	1030–1160 AD	1020–1160 AD
GrN-26991	Fållnäs	Sea barrage	915 ± 20	1040–1170 AD	1030–1190 AD
GrN-26992	Fållnäs	Sea barrage	860 ± 20	1160–1220 AD	1060–1260 AD
St 10674	Fållnäs	Sea barrage	810 ± 75	1150–1290+ AD	1030–1300 AD
GrN-24399	Fållnäs	Sea barrage	675 ± 25	1280–1385 AD	1280–1390 AD
GrN-24347	Mörkö	Sea barrage	1070 ± 30	900–1020 AD	890–1030 AD
LuA-4911	Mörkö	Sea barrage	1035 ± 85	890–1160 AD	780–1210 AD
St 14496	Birka	Borg, L2	1210 ± 30	770–890 AD	690–900 AD

Lab no.	Site	Structure	14C-age BP ± stdv 1σ	Cal 1 sigma	Cal 2 sigma
St 14497	Birka	Borg, L4	1190 ± 30	780–890 AD	690–900 AD
St 14494	Birka	Borg, A3	1090 ± 25	890–995 AD	890–1020 AD
St 14498	Birka	Borg, A11B	1085 ± 35	890–1000 AD	890–1020 AD
St 14499	Birka	Borg, F131	1045 ± 30	980–1020 AD	890–1030 AD
St 14495	Birka	Borg, A11	1030 ± 30	990–1022 AD	900–1160 AD
St 11204	Birka	Town Rampart, 1a	1180 ± 100	760–970 AD	660–1020 AD
St 11512	Birka	Town Rampart, 1b	1175 ± 100	770–980 AD	660–1030 AD

Pile Barricades: Defending the Lake Mälar Region

Another geographical region with a similar landscape of defence, and where there are several archaeological remains, is the inlet to the trading place or proto-town of Birka in Lake Mälaren. At different inlets to the Lake Mälar region there are place-names indicating pile barricades or 'stäk' (Figure 11.1). Within the *Strongholds and Fortifications* project, the location of Fållnäs has been excavated, both on land and in water (Olausson and Lindström 2003). Here the remains of a pile barricade blocked the free passage east of the open water from the Baltic to Lake Mälaren, as did a corresponding pile barricade on the western side at Mörkö. Both are placed in narrow bays and both have been dated to the tenth century, that is, the earlier Birka period (Table 11.1). These pile barricades were probably important parts of a deep defence system, like the one controlling Östergötland's inland. The royal power in this case was that which controlled Birka/Adelsö. Other pile barricades blocking access to Lake Mälaren have been dated to the Viking Age, for example those in Stockholm's ström. Pile barricades not only controlled waterways but protected ports and jetties as at Birka.

The Fortifications of Birka and the Concept of 'Defence-in-depth' in the Viking Age

The intense archaeological investigations at Birka have so far concentrated on the town settlement and its grave fields. Only minor exploratory excavations have taken place on its defences. A widely accepted view has been that the proto-towns around the Baltic were 'open' settlements, not fortified until a late phase in their development and no earlier than the tenth century (cf. Clarke and Ambrosiani 1991). We have been able to show, however, that this was not the case at Birka.

Figure 11.1.
The Lake Mälar region
with archaeological
sites or place-names
indicating pile barricades.
Map by L. Bergström.

Today, Birka's visible defence comprises the remains of the town rampart with associated pile barricades, fort, garrison, and possible harbour (Figure 11.2). Birka is optimally situated on a small island at a crossing of important waterways leading north, south, east, and west and at the junction of different administrative regions. Birka existed between the second half of the eighth century and the second half of the tenth century. For a trading-place at such a location, a military presence would have been of crucial importance from the beginning. A prerequisite for its existence would have been the presence of a king who could guarantee merchants safe passage and peaceable conditions for their activities.

Excavations over the last few years on Birka's defences show that the town was indeed fortified, both on land and in the water, from the time of its foundation in the middle of the eighth century. It is now clear that the fortification of Birka was conceived as a sophisticated plan whose components were in place from the start and which were constructed to withstand attack from the only
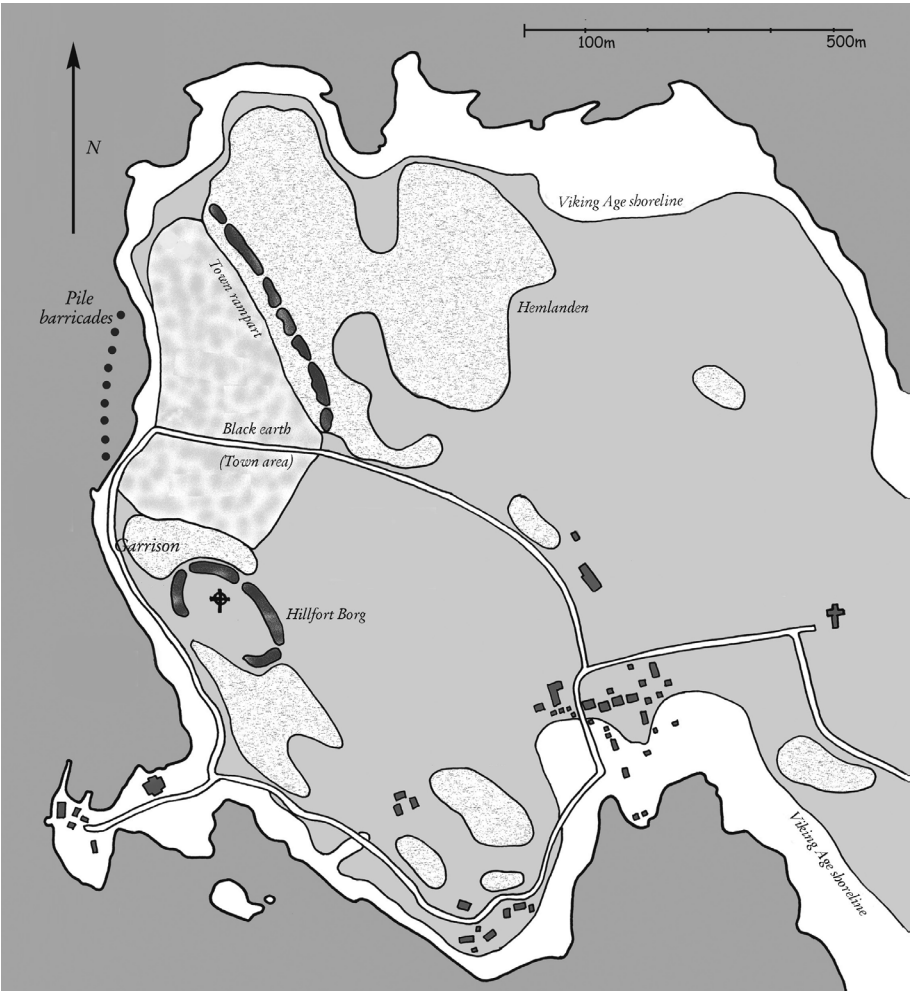
Figure 11.2. The fortifications of Birka constituted by pile barricades, ramparts, hill-fort, and garrison. Map by C. Hedenstierna-Jonson.

possible threat, seaborne warriors (Holmquist Olausson 2002a; Holmquist Olausson 2002b).

The Town Rampart

The town rampart measured 750 m in length during the Viking Age of which 450 m remain today. The rampart was divided into seven segments by six openings of which some might be gates. To the north the earthwork runs into what

appears to be an early harbour and seems to extend as a row of piles out into Lake Mälaren. The date and function of these pile barricades is as yet uncertain, and a full survey is needed before they can be properly understood. A related problem is the southern extent of the town rampart, as the area has been subjected to intensive cultivation and any traces of a rampart could have disappeared at an early stage. Within our project different types of surveys have been undertaken to clarify this issue. A clear delineation can be traced, indicating where the town and fort ramparts meet. A row of boat rivets found in the southern end of the town rampart are of similar character to those found in our excavations of the fort rampart, indicating that the rampart was of uniform wooden construction throughout its original full course of *c.* 750 m.

Excavation of the town rampart showed it to have been a well-planned construction in shell-wall technique, first erected at the time of the foundation of the town (Table 11.1). Beneath it, a settlement layer was found that dates considerably earlier than the town (Black Earth) (Holmquist Olausson 1993).

The Fortified Hill and its Defence Works

The fort at Birka is one of the few large-scale Viking-Age structures known in Sweden. It consists of a 350 m long semicircular rampart bounded by a rock cliff to the south. Several claims have been made about this fort, including that its foundation predates that of the town of Birka, thus linking it to the local hilltop site tradition of the Mälar valley (Arbman 1939: 58). The fort at Birka, however, differs markedly from these other forts in close proximity. A further claim is that the fort was constructed late in the tenth century, owing to the graves which partly underlie its rampart (Clarke and Ambrosiani 1991). The fort rampart, unlike the town rampart, had never been excavated, so establishing its date was allotted high priority within our project (Figure 11.3).

The excavations showed the rampart to be substantial and well built in a shell-wall technique. About twenty layers have been documented within the rampart forming two distinct phases. Both phases yielded evidence for similar wooden constructions — super-structures such as battlements and parapets in the form of postholes, a worked wooden plank, and a hundred rivets of a type known as 'clench-nails' used for holding boat and ship timbers together (Fennö Muyingo 1998; Fennö Muyingo 2000; Hedenstierna-Jonson 2000).

The rampart wall constructed using earth and stone is in keeping with the local stone-building traditions of the Migration hilltop site era. Dating evidence (Table 11.1) shows that the earliest rampart, which was low, was con-
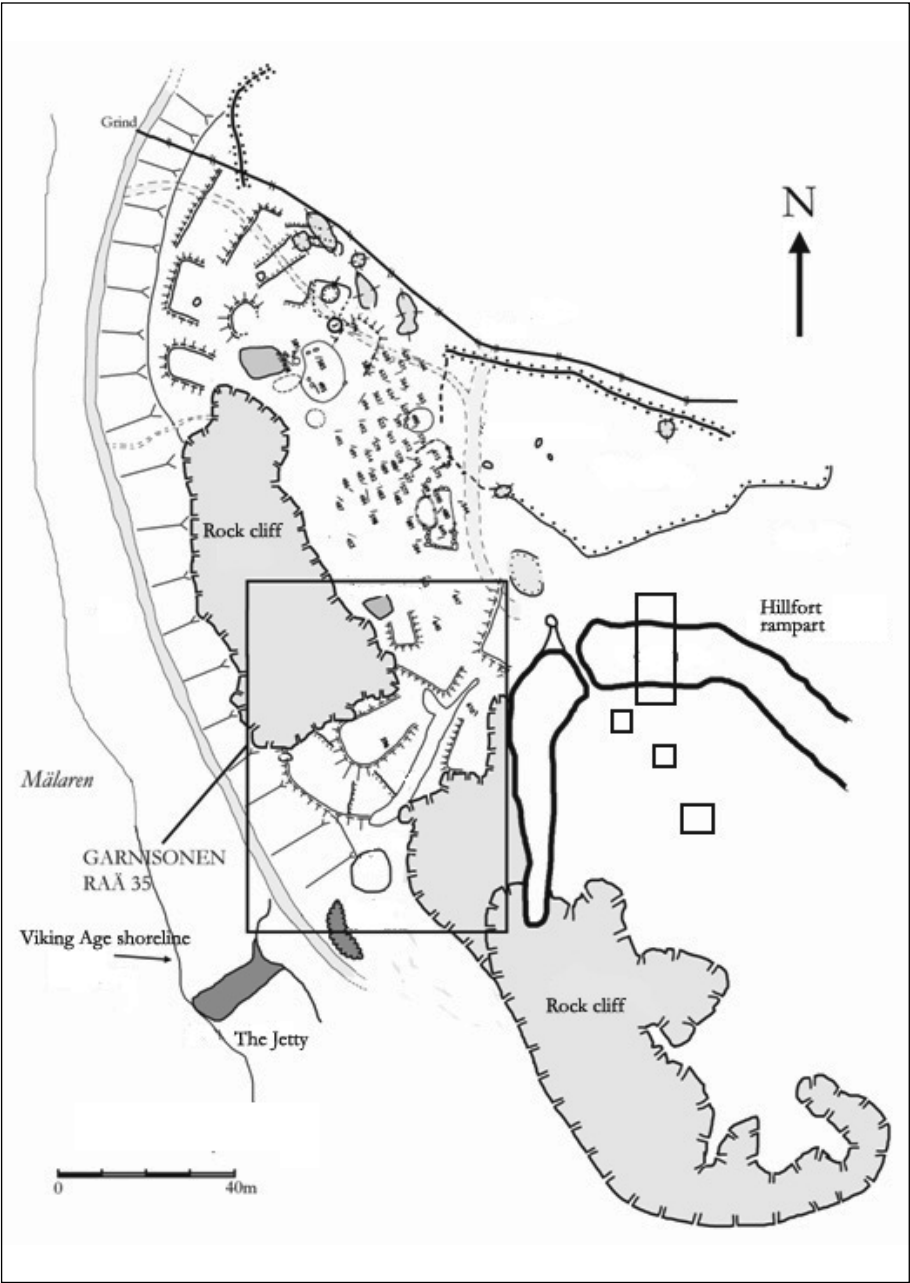
Figure 11.3. The fortified hill with hill-fort and garrison. Areas excavated within the *Strongholds and Fortifications* project marked. Map by M. Olausson & L. Kitzler Åhfeldt.
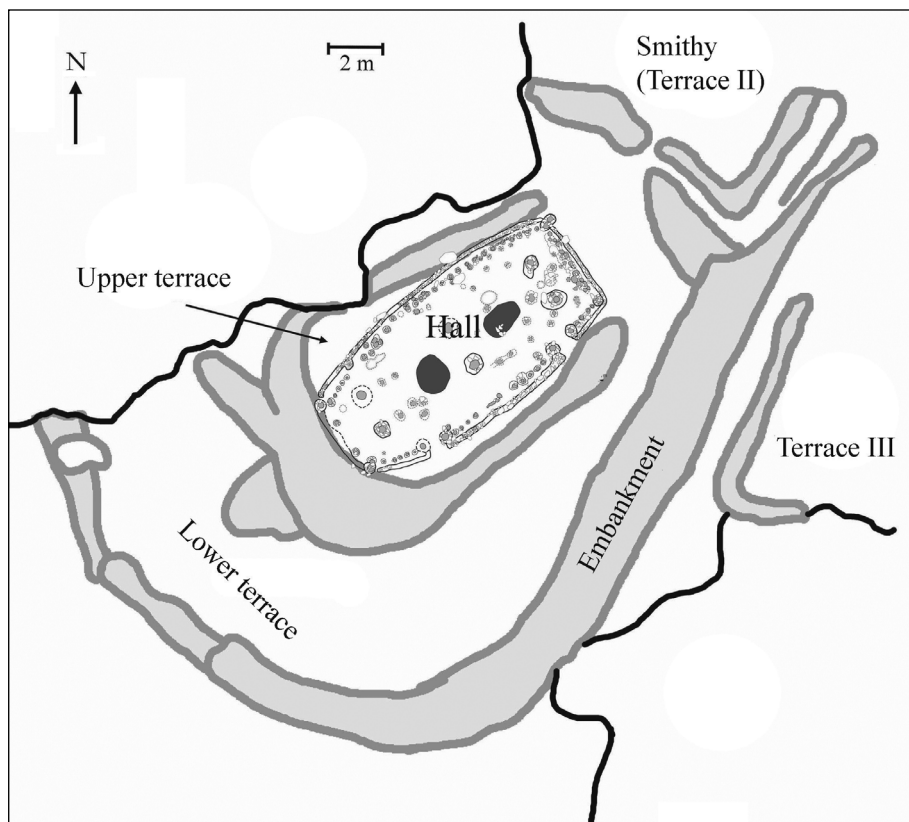
Figure 11.4. Overall view over the garrison. Map by M. Olausson & L. Kitzler Åhfeldt.

structed when the town was founded. It was burned down during the ninth century and then strengthened considerably being built up again to twice its former size. The later rampart shows repeated signs of burning, towards the end of the tenth century; which allows for the fort to have been in use even after the abandonment of the town.

In close proximity to the fort, just outside the entrance designated the 'King's Gate', the garrison was situated on a steep slope leading down to the waterfront (Figure 11.4). The area had been levelled by several stone-set terraces, but the remaining slope is still considerable. The strategic location of the garrison blocks the direct path from the water up to the fort and, while the buildings in the garrison area were protected between two rock cliffs, just a few steps up the fort side commands a view of the surrounding waters and

the town area. In addition to the rock cliffs, the garrison-area was enclosed by a rampart with a wooden superstructure, commencing facing the waterfront and continuing up the slope almost the full length of the garrison area. To the north, the garrison area borders one of Birka's wealthiest grave fields, containing several of the islands chamber-graves. Out of the five visible terraces, four have been excavated, each displaying remnants of wooden buildings and constructions. The settlement was dense but well planned producing wooden lined drains, wooden boardwalks, and a cistern (Kitzler 1997; Hedenstierna-Jonson, Kitzler, and Stjerna 1998; Holmquist Olausson and Kitzler Åhfeldt 2002).

The accompanying smithy contained at least four forges where activity seems to have been intense. The main tasks probably included repair of weaponry, while other archaeological material, for example, indicates the production of iron Thor's-hammer amulets, knives, and padlocks. Below the settlement, outside the rampart, a connecting jetty construction extended out into the water.

The most extensive terrace held the remains of a great building with the character of a hall or assembly building. Based on the finds, the hall-building, as well as the rest of the garrison, is dated to the second half of the tenth century. As with the other parts of Birka's fortified structures, the garrison was constructed and used over more than one phase. The earliest remains are dated to the second part of the eighth century (Holmquist Olausson and Kitzler Åhfeldt 2002: 21). Even here, the structures were enlarged and strengthened at least once, and the latest phase is represented by the hall building. The hall was built according to a thousand-year-old longhouse tradition that ceased towards the end of the tenth century. The archaic tradition of construction was perhaps adopted as a deliberate link to former ways and to pre-Christian religion. Measuring 19 m × 9 m, the dimensions are not fully consistent with Iron Age hall buildings, something that may be at least partly explained by the limited area in which it was built. The roof rested on three pairs of stout posts creating a large open room inside. Analyses of soil-samples taken from the layer identified as the floor and the distribution of finds indicates a spatial division of the interior, even though there are no remaining traces of inner walls. The seat of honour was situated in the northwest, defined by a concentration of high-status finds. The eastern part of the house served for storage, with extensive finds of weapons and other objects. Recurring finds of padlocks and coffer-mounts along the inner walls of the building are interpreted as the remains of storage boxes or chests. Weapons, shields, spears, and lances were also found lined up against or hanging from the walls.

Defending Birka

Like the Danish ring fortresses, Birka's fortified structures are an expression of the power-political situation during the second half of the tenth century. While the ring fortresses reflect the growing power of a centralized state, possibly ridden by civil war or arming for the conquest of other lands, Birka's fortification is a demonstration of strength and an expression of power showing evidence of advanced military construction in continuous use from the establishment of the settlement. The nature of Birka's fortifications was dictated by contemporary battle techniques, where naval warfare and archery played a dominant role. Tactics would have concentrated mainly on siege, threat, and extortion, and the defensive structures on the island should be considered as part of a defence-in-depth system including pile barricades and possibly other features controlling the various entrances into the Lake Mälar region (Hedenstierna-Jonson 2006).

Into the Middle Ages

What happened in the eleventh and twelfth centuries? Apart from the pile barricades in Denmark and Sweden dated to this period, with a few exceptions there is no evidence for castles or citadels as early as the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century. Exceptions also include the previously mentioned Ölandic ring fortresses, originally built in the Migration Period but reused during the Crusades of the Middle Ages. Neither the Migration Period hilltop sites nor the Viking Age Trelleborg-type forts had successors. So when were the earliest medieval castles built? The oldest citadels or castles have been dated to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries on art historical grounds, a period when feudal private, royal, and church property was built on a larger scale, dominating the landscape and warfare in the centuries to come. Remarkably, no proficient archaeological excavations in Sweden have been undertaken on early castles and citadels leaving them without absolute dating and thus determining an important task for future research.

Continuity and Discontinuity of Fortifications and Defence Works in Eastern Scandinavia

The potent demonstrations of power that constituted the monumental constructions of the Migration Period were abandoned in the sixth century. A landscape of defence without visible constructions replaced the hilltop sites

reflecting a change in power-structures, warfare, and strategy. The defence structures of Viking Age Scandinavia are elusive when it comes to source-material. The remains of the Norsemen's knowledge of fortifications are confined to written sources, and to non-Scandinavian territory leaving the situation in eastern Scandinavia a Viking Age paradox when it comes to fortifications and defence works. Exceptions, like Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*, give glimpses of insight into this early phase of state formation in Scandinavia. An early medieval central power is however difficult to discern both in the written sources and in the archaeological material. The question is, why? The power-political situation in Viking Age Scandinavia was turbulent. Periods of increased martial activity were succeeded by periods of relative calm, a fluctuating development that continued into the Middle Ages. The societal elite show greater political ambitions, consolidating power and manifesting it in physical forms in the landscape. There are attempts to control not only souls but territories. The perpetual conflict between the control of royal power and the ambitions of the feudal aristocracy, so typical of the Middle Ages, can already be discerned. But even though there is a king with deputies and an advancing administration the stability of a strong state is far into the future.

The archaeological evidence of the unstable power-political situation during the Viking Age is sparse. Still these conflict-ridden times will have the development of extensive but less monumental fortifications like the pile barricades. As the results of actual conflict the barricades were erected in the periphery, distanced from the territorial centre. By placing the pile barricades in the outer boundaries of a political region they also define a geographical region or territory that could be seen as an early state. The military and the defensive structures constituted an important part in the process of state formation.

The change of focus from local to regional, power over souls to power over territory, was reflected in the landscape of defence. Wide geographical areas needed to be controlled and patrolled. A high level of mobility was crucial that included mounted warriors and diversified techniques. Mental boundaries were visualized physically in the landscape in the form of ramparts, pile barricades, and systematized place-names. When needed these boundaries could be used for defensive purposes.

During the Migration Period the actual fighting took place outside the forts (cf. Olausson 2007). These sites were only used for military purposes in exceptional cases. When the outcome of battle was decided the victors burned down the fort or the hilltop site in a symbolic act of power. Entering the Viking Age the hall buildings on the great farms took over this role, for example, the warriors' hall in Birka's Garrison. Sometime well into the Middle Ages the great halls

were replaced by citadels and castles combining the representative and symbolic functions of the halls, and hilltop sites before them, with more advanced military capacities.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Heaney, Seamus (trans.). 1999. *Beowulf* (London)

Scholz, Bernhard W., and Barbara Rogers (trans.). 1970. *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories* (Ann Arbor)

Waitz, Georg (ed.). 1988. *Vita Anskarii auctore Rimberto*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*, 78 vols (Hannover, 1871–), LV

Zeeberg, Peter (trans.). 2000. Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum* (København)

Secondary Studies

Arbman, Holger. 1939. *Birka: Sveriges äldsta handelsstad*, Från forntid och medeltid, 1 (Stockholm)

Brink, Stefan. 1999. 'Social Order in the Early Scandinavian Landscape', in *Settlement and Landscape: Proceedings of a Conference in Århus, Denmark, May 4–7, 1998*, ed. by Charlotte Fabech and Jytte Ringtved (Århus), pp. 423–39

Christiansen, Eric. 2002. *The Norsemen in the Viking Age* (Oxford)

Clarke, Helen, and Bjorn Ambrosiani. 1991. *Towns in the Viking Age* (Leicester)

Fennö Muyingo, H. 1998. *Borgvallen: arkeologisk undersökning 1996*, Birkas Befästning, 2 (Stockholm)

——, 2000. *Borgvallen II: Utvidgad undersökning av Borgvallen och underliggande grav 1997, Arkeologisk undersökning 1997*, Birkas Befästning, 3 (Stockholm)

Halsall, Guy. 2003. *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450–900* (London)

Hedenstierna-Jonson, Charlotte. 2000. *Borg: Arkeologisk undersökning 1998/1999*, Borgar och befästningsverk i Mellansverige 400–1100 efter Kristus, 2 (Stockholm)

——, 2006. *The Birka Warrior: The Material Culture of a Martial Society* (Stockholm)

Hedenstierna-Jonson, Charlotte, Laila Kitzler, and Niklas Stjerna. 1998. *Garnisonen II: Arkeologisk undersökning 1998* (Stockholm)

Holmquist Olausson, Lena. 1993. *Aspects on Birka: Investigations and Survey, 1976–1989* (Stockholm)

——, 2002a. 'The Fortification of Birka', in *Maritime Warfare in Northern Europe: Technology, Organisation, Logistics and Administration, 500 BC–1500 AD*, ed. by Anne Nørgård Jørgensen and others, Publications from the National Museum, 6 (København), pp. 159–67

——, 2002b. 'Patterns of Settlement and Defence at the Proto-town of Birka, Lake Mälar, Eastern Sweden', in *The Scandinavians from the Vendel Period to the Tenth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. by Judith Jesch, Studies in Historical Archaeoethnolgy, 5 (San Marino), pp. 153–67

Holmquist Olausson, Lena, and Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt. 2002. *Krigarnas hus: arkeologisk undersökning av ett hallhus i Birkas Garnison*, Borgar och Befästningsverk i Mellansverige 400–1100 efter Kristus, 4 (Stockholm)

Kalmring, Sven. 2010. *Der Hafen von Haithabu*, Die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu, 14 (Neumünster)

Kitzler, Laila. 1997. *Rapport från utgrävningen av Garnisonen på Björkö 1997* (Stockholm)

Olausson, Michael. 1995. *Det inneslutna rummet: om kultiska hägnader, fornborgar och befästa gårdar i Uppland från 1300 f. Kr. till Kristi födelse*, Arkeologiska undersökningar, 9 (Stockholm)

——, 2000. 'Husabyar, krig och krigare', in *En bok om Husbyar*, ed. by Michael Olausson (Stockholm), pp. 125–150

——, 2007. *En vallomgärdad storgård på Lindö utmark*, Rapporter från Arkeologiska forskninglaboratoriet, 10 (Stockholm)

——, 2009. '"At Peace with Walls": Fortifications and their Significance, AD 400–1100', in *The Martial Society, Aspects on Warriors, Warfare and Fortifications*, ed. by Lena Holmquist Olausson and Michael Olausson, Thesis and Papers in Scientific Archaeology, 9 (Stockholm), pp. 35–70

——, 2011. 'När Mälardalens elit flyttade upp på höjderna', in *Makt, kult och plats: Högstatusmiljöer under den äldre järnåldern*, Arkeologi i Stockholms län, 5, Stockholms länsmuseum (Stockholm), pp. 5–14

Olausson, Michael, and Jens Lindström. 2003. *Fållnäs: Arkeologiska undersökningar del 1*, Borgar och Befästningsverk i Mellansverige 400–1100 efter Kristus, 3 (Stockholm)

Olsen, Olaf, Holger Schmidt, and Else Roesdahl. 1977. *Fyrkat: en jysk vikingeborg I, Borgen och bebyggelsen* (København)

Roesdahl, Else. 1987. 'The Danish Geometrical Fortresses and their Context', in *Anglo-Norman Studies IX: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1986*, ed. by R. Allen Brown (Woodbridge)

Skaaning, Paul. 1992. *Harald Blåtands sidste kamp: Trelleborgene og brydningerne i dansk vikingetid 979–983* (Lyngby)

Steuer, Heiko. 1990. 'Handwerk auf spätantiken Höhensiedlungen des 4./5. Jahrhunderts in Südwestdeutschland', in *The Archaeology of Gudme and Lundeborg: Papers Presented at a Conference at Svendborg, October 1991*, ed. by Poul O. Nielsen, Klavs Randsborg, and Henrik Thrane, Arkæologiske Studier, 10 (København), pp. 128–44

——, 1997. 'Herrschaft von der Höhe', in *Die Alamannen*, ed. by Archäologisches Landesmuseum (Stuttgart), pp. 149–62

Stjerna, Niklas. 1999. *Götavirke arkeologisk undersökning 1999: Östergötland, Söderköpings kommun, Västra Husby socken, Hageby Raä 12 and Hylinge Raä 111* (Stockholm)

Weibull, Curt. 1974. *Die Geaten des Beowulfepos und die dänischen Trelleburgen*, Acta Regiae Societatis scientiarum et litterarum Gothoburgensis, Humaniora 10 (Göteborg)

Defensive Sites of the Early Middle Ages in North-West Spain

Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo

T he aim of this essay is to provide a brief summary of recent archaeo-
logical studies of defensive sites of the early Middle Ages (fifth to tenth
centuries) in the north-western part of the Iberian Peninsula and to
discuss in social terms the role that these structures played in the formation of
medieval societies.

There is a notable tradition in medieval archaeology in the north of the
Peninsula involving the analysis of medieval fortresses and castles, and the
subject is one of the focal points around which the discipline has developed.
Indeed, in the last thirty years numerous regional studies, monographs on spe-
cific sites, as well as presentations on the subject have been made.[1] Furthermore,

---

[1] The present contribution is part of the research project funded by the Spanish Minister
of Research, *Inequality in Medieval Northern Iberia Landscapes*, HUM2012-32514, the activity
of the 'Heritage and Cultural Landscape Research Group' funded by the Basque Government
(IT315-10) and the UFI 'History, Thought and Material Culture' (UFI2011/02).

I was fortunate to be able to avail of the comments and, generally unpublished, information
of numerous colleagues and specialists when writing this paper. Among them I would like to
mention Ondare Babesa, Aratikos, Castellum, Castro and Strato. Alfonso Vigil-Escalera, Julio
Escalona, Iñaki Martín Viso, and Lorena Elorza kindly read and helped improve the text. This
paper was written in 2009.

Worthy of particular mention among territorial works is that by Avello 1985 for Asturias;
that by Bohigas Roldán 1999 for what is nowadays called Cantabria; for Bizkaia, the work by
García Camino 2002: 265–69. At a more general level, these works are worth mentioning:
Huerta 2001; Ferreira Fernades 2001; Alarcón 2001; Araguas 1994; Ruibal 2005.

Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo is Professor of Archaeology at Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea.

recent archaeological interventions in the context of restoration projects have revealed new defensive sites and established complex sequences of occupation. It must be noted, however, that many such interventions remain unpublished as technical reports or 'Grey Literature'. Currently, in the whole of the north of the Peninsula only Curiel Castle in Peñaferruz (Gijón, Asturias) has been extensively excavated and had those results published (Gutiérrez González 2003).

From a theoretical and conceptual point of view, at least in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, the study of early medieval hilltop occupation has been dominated by explanatory frameworks concerned with geo-strategy, politics, and military history, with defensive sites considered separately from other forms of contemporary occupation. The visibility of fortresses and castles in archaeological evidence and texts, as well as the assumed invisibility of peasant communities and other social groups, has meant that defensive structures are difficult to explain in social terms, having been more easily situated in political and military history. Most historical writing on early medieval castles and fortresses has attempted to contextualize them with regard to chronicle accounts and other texts. Furthermore, the study of defensive sites is biased by the fact that when territory is archaeologically analysed only from the perspective of castles, we understand where power was concentrated but not necessarily how it operated on the ground.

Since the 1990s there has been fundamental theoretical and methodological revision in the study of early medieval societies of the Duero Valley and Cantabria moving beyond the historiographic approaches which dominated former decades. Previous approaches were characterized by agenda established upon the reading of written texts from certain perspectives; for example, the existence of a defensive *limes* to cope with the violent northern peoples. Texts show permanent resistance, from antiquity to the Middle Ages, to external political control, including frequent *razzias* and attacks by Andalusians in places like Castile and Alava within the framework of border dynamics between Christians and Muslims.

These approaches have been replaced by a profound revision of the role of territorial powers in the early Middle Ages in social and political terms. Of special importance is José A. Gutiérrez González's doctoral work on the kingdom of León, which critically characterized archaeological evidence and explained networks of early medieval castles, the formation of feudalism, and the political structures of the kingdom of León in contextual terms (Gutiérrez González 1995).

Subsequently, other academic works have tackled the role of fortified sites and castles in the making of medieval societies in the Duero Valley and in

Cantabria. Making no claim to be exhaustive, we can also mention work in the Castilian area by Ernesto Pastor, Julio Escalona, Iñaki Martín Viso, and R. Vázquez, and in the eastern area by, once again, Iñaki Martín Viso and Margarita Fernández. From a strictly archaeological perspective, the most recent works of José A. Gutiérrez González and Iñaki García Camino likewise merit mention (Martín Viso 2000; Martín Viso 2002b; Pastor Díaz de Garayo 1996: 201–17; Escalona Monge 2002; Fernández Mier 1999; Gutiérrez González 2001b; Vázquez Álvarez 2003).

These studies analysed in political terms, and from differing viewpoints, the role of castles and fortified sites within the framework of the feudalization of the north of the Peninsula. However, the lack of material in the archaeological record to explain at a local level the working of society in these defensive settlements and their relationship with rural communities, as well as the focus on macro analysis of the crystallization of territorial powers, has limited the capacity to explain power centres.

Recent studies have raised new subjects and discussions formulated at European level. This is the case, for example, in debates about the phenomenon of *incastellamento*. This paradigm, formulated in Italy by Pierre Toubert and extensively debated in Italian medieval archaeology, has been analysed in a Spanish context from two fundamentally different perspectives: verification of the existence of *incastellamento* in the Andalusi area, in the light of archaeological interventions in the south of Spain, and verification of the effective role played by castles as an instrument of feudalization in societies in the north of the Peninsula (Barceló and Toubert 1998; Martín Viso 2001). Although in both cases the ineffectiveness of the paradigm in the case of the Iberian Peninsula was shown, these studies contributed to a deeper, more complex social analysis of fortified sites in Andalusi and feudal societies.

Another subject formulated in recent years is the analysis of fortresses and castles in terms of the definition of early medieval powers and the dialogue between central powers and local spheres in terms of the articulation of political structure. Research by Santiago Castellanos and Iñaki Martín Viso (Castellanos and Martín Viso 2005) in particular has helped to formulate a new approach for studying the configuration of early medieval political sites by reconsidering the role of castles and fortresses as central places and points of reference for political structure at a local scale. Similarly, Aleaxandra Chavarria, on the basis of recent archaeological work in the north of Italy and the south of Gaul, has studied fifth- to seventh-century castles in the *Meseta*, in relation to the structuring of large estates following the demise of the *villae*, as indicators of the militarization of elites within the framework of
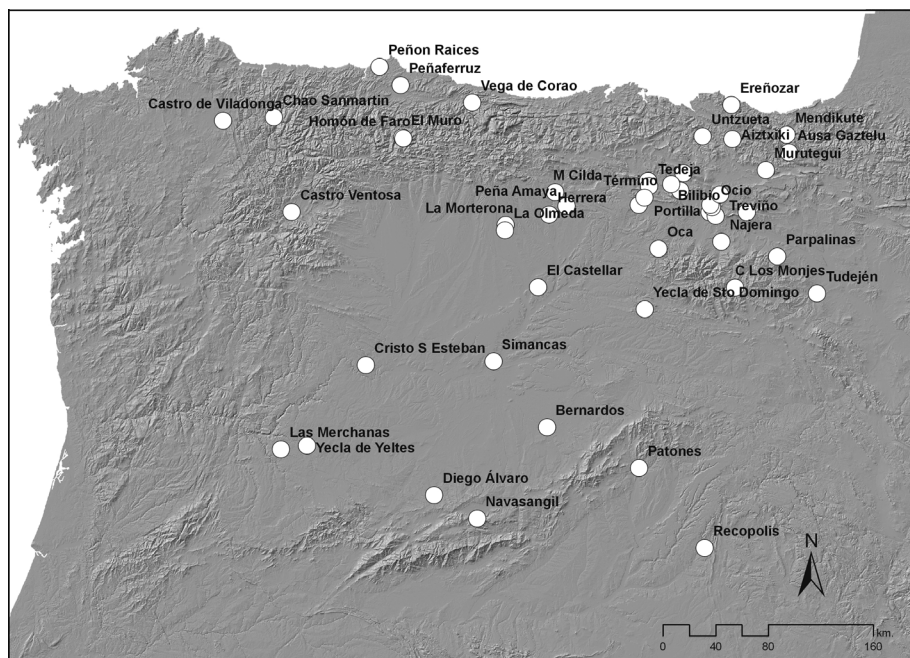
Figure 12.1. Map of the north-western part of the Iberian Peninsula
with the places mentioned in the text. Map by J. A. Quirós.

political restructuring of territory following the disarticulation of the empire (Chavarria Arnau 2005).

Although there have been notable advances in conceptual terms, perhaps the main current problem is the lack of good quality archaeological studies to aid the development of existing paradigms. In the following pages, I will attempt to systematize the available records and put forward new interpretative scenarios.

Castles and Fortresses

On the basis of current evidence, analysis of castles and fortresses of the fifth to seventh centuries in the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula (Figure 12.1) can be approached from two complementary viewpoints, both of a social nature.

Firstly, one must remember that in our territory, as in large parts of Europe and the Mediterranean, a phenomenon which characterizes the organization of rural territory is the permanent reconstruction of political frameworks at local level. This situation is due to frequent processes of fragmentation and

integration with ongoing negotiation between the elites and local communities (Davies 2006: 1–2). Such profound political and social transformations have powerful implications for the morphology of historical landscapes, which are merely social products. In other words, different population patterns and hierarchies are significant in a given social formation, which is why analysis of different components should be able to provide an explanation of political structure in a given territory.

In a recent major contribution, Santiago Castellanos and Iñaki Martín Viso explained how the fragmentation of centralized imperial political structure gave rise to a strengthening of local power centres, which played a leading role throughout the entire early Middle Ages. The processes of construction of state or proto-state power centres between 500 and 1000 in this region are the result of a complex dialogue and negotiation between both scales of power, thus explaining the complex processes found in chronicles and other written accounts of the period that refer to such sites (Castellanos and Martín Viso 2005). Furthermore, and depending on written texts, Castellanos and Martin Viso emphasize that on a local scale these powers revolved — although not exclusively — around castles and fortresses.

This interpretative line can be closely related to other processes detected in recent years at a European level, which centre on the formation of castles and fortresses in the early Middle Ages. Recent research on early medieval territories in southern Europe have demonstrated the importance of castles and fortresses founded in the fifth century that hierarchized territory; from Slovenia and northern and central Italy, down to Provence and Languedoc (Brogiolo 2005). A close relationship has been established between the end of the Roman *villae* and the creation of a network of *castra* as a result of the militarization of elites in late antiquity (Wickham 2005: 202).

Overall, this is a complex phenomenon, since castles vary greatly as regards size and some maintained urban elements. L. Schneider and A. Cagnana have analysed the great variety of function and type which characterizes the castles and fortresses of the fifth to eighth centuries in southern France and northern Italy, a process that happens even later in other territories. Such territorial planning on a local scale resulted in a complex centralized political structure.

These stimulating new approaches have allowed us to introduce criteria for a social analysis of the relationship between central and peripheral powers. On the other hand, however, it is much more difficult to analyse how power worked at a local level, at least not until the tenth century when texts relating to monasteries and episcopal centres become plentiful.

A second aspect when analysing the social and political role of fortified sites and castles in the early Middle Ages — a period characterized by extreme territorial fragmentation and social recomposition — is the need to analyse landscapes in systemic and integral terms. Systemic approaches, promoted by so-called New Archaeology from the 1960s, have been questioned due to functionalist excess, especially in North American archaeology, and for their neglect of social dynamics (Brumfiel 1992). At the same time, the social complexity of the early medieval period has led archaeology to resort to systemic explanations to understand such complex processes as economic transformations in northern Europe during the Carolingian period (Hodges 1982).

With this viewpoint in mind, we will now explore the active social role played by castles and fortresses in the early Middle Ages by means of an integral analysis of territory with comparative analysis at a regional level. My approach moves beyond the centrality held by the most visible elements of power (castles, churches, and, occasionally, cemeteries) up to the present. Instead, the role of rural communities which have recently become archaeologically more visible will be examined. With the limits currently set by available records, my aim is to analyse castles and fortified sites as parts of organic systems around which relations develop from above downwards (with respect to the construction of central powers) and from below upwards (as regards understanding forms of social organization of landscapes at the micro level).

Three main periods can be distinguished as a result of a social analysis of castles in the north-western part of the Iberian Peninsula. Firstly, analysis will focus on castles and fortresses built during the collapse of the empire and the formation of Germanic states on Hispanic soil, the period *c*. 450 to *c*. 750. Then, and following the Islamic conquest of 711, a new social and political geography developed in the Cantabrian region and Duero Basin in which castles (including those inherited from the previous period) played a new role within the framework of a considerably modified system dominated by powers of a reduced local sphere, which can be defined as chiefdoms and proto-state formations. Already in the tenth century, more complex processes of state construction had commenced, laying the foundations for feudal kingdoms following the transfer of the court to León (910) in the western sector and the crystallization of the county of Castile (towards 930). New networks of castles emerged in this period, articulating state formations and enduring throughout the Middle Ages.

First-Generation Castles in the North-Western Part of the Peninsula (Fifth to Seventh Centuries)

Recent interventions on a series of hilltop sites in several parts of the north-western Iberian Peninsula have revealed defensive structures of varying in size and date but which can be founded as early as the fifth century. As noted previously, these types of occupations are not exclusive to this part of the Peninsula, but instead represent a generalized process in the Peninsula and throughout southern Europe. Parallel to the disintegration of the Empire in Italy, Gaul, and Hispania, the number of castles and fortresses multiplied; only very rarely did they have early or late imperial precedents.

Scholars who have studied these sites have proposed different interpretative scenarios. Whereas some have underlined the role played by states in the creation of networks of castles, others emphasize the role of militarized aristocracies from the fifth century onwards, while not entirely neglecting the possibility of state action on occasion. Finally, for other authors peasant communities were responsible for the foundation of fortifications.[2]

Without attempting to be exhaustive, the existence of hilltop occupations of the fifth and seventh centuries is attested throughout practically the entire Mediterranean coastline, from Catalonia to Andalusia. In archaeological terms, the best examples are found in Catalonia, noteworthy examples include Sant Julià de Ramis, Puig Rom, and Altimiris, and Roc d'Enclar in Andorra, although prospecting for and excavating of such sites has also been carried out in the south, south-east, and Andalusia (Burch and others 2006; de Palol 2004; Sancho 2011; Llovera 1997; Torro Abad and Ferrer Marset 1987; Gutiérrez Lloret 1996; Gómez Becerra 1998).

Nevertheless, the notable presence of this type of site (characterized by the reoccupation of *castros*) in the north-western part of the Peninsula is striking, both in the Duero Basin and in the regions of Galicia and Asturias. The phenomenon has been studied by various authors with different perspectives on the role they may have played in political terms (Martín Viso 2006b; Chavarria Arnau 2004–05; Gutiérrez González 2001a).

The determining factor of the analysis for this type of site is the poor quality of the available archaeological record. Although the list of hilltop occupations

---

[2] On the first two positions, Wickham 2005: 480; Brogiolo and Chavarria Arnau 2005: 69–88. The importance of peasant communities has been claimed by authors like Gutiérrez González 2002: 309.

Figure 12.2.
Terra Sigillata Hispanica
Tardía, fifth-century archaeo-
logical indicator from the
castles in the Spanish plateau.
Photo by A. Vigil-Escalera.

potentially attributable to the first centuries of the early Middle Ages is signifi-
cant, and a review of archaeological inventories increases their potential num-
ber, only a small number of sites have been studied in detail. On the one hand,
there is a scarcity of extensive archaeological interventions, with the result that
in most cases *castella* are known only from superficial prospecting or by the
discovery of collections of ceramic materials whose representativeness is practi-
cally unknown. This fact becomes highly significant if we take into account the
extensive nature of such places.

In most cases, interventions are concerned with walled enclosures (Yecla
de Yeltes, La Morterona, Tedeja, Navasangil), and in only a few instances have
internal constructions been excavated (normally adjoined to the walls them-
selves: Monte Cildá, Muelas de Pan, Bernardos, Pontón de la Oliva). In other
cases, structures have yet to be detected despite being documented in writ-
ten sources (as is the case of Peña Amaya or Oca, still not precisely located).
With the exception of sites like Cristo de San Esteban (1800 m²), interven-
tions have been isolated and limited to defensive features (Nuño González and
Domínguez Bolaños 2001).

These limitations explain why establishing a chronology of occupation
for these sites is a complex task. Normally, the main chronological indicator
used is late Roman pottery called 'Terra Sigillata Hispanica Tardia' (TSHT),
whose chronology is debated (Vigil Escalera Guirado 2009). At all events,
the reduced importance of TSHT (Figure 12.2), the frequency with which
imitations of *sigillata* (stamped) are documented, as opposed to the scarce
frequency of late Roman pottery called 'Dérivée de Sigillée Paléochrétienne'
(DSP), allows us to draw a coherent picture for the fifth century in sites such
as Bernardos, Muelas de Pan, and probably Monte Cildá, La Morterona, and
Las Merchanas (Gonzalo González 2007: 94; Caballero Arribas 2006; Abásolo
Álvarez and others 1984: 172; Maluquer de Motes 1956: 80; Nuño González

and Domínguez Bolaños 2001: 106; García Guinea, González Echegaray, and San Miguel Ruiz 1966; García Guinea, Iglesias Gil, and Caloca 1973).

The Archaeology of First-Generation Castles

As in other European regions, in the *Meseta* too the material characteristics of *castra* are heterogeneous with significant differences as regards size and material characteristics. In relation to size and planning, it is possible to differentiate at least three different categories. Castles with a notable complexity as regards planning are over 20 ha in size but with improvised defensive systems or sometimes built with reused materials as at Peña Amaya (32 ha) and Pontón de la Oliva (27 ha). In these cases, there is sufficient evidence to suggest the existence of dense occupation and marked hierarchization of space. Especially significant are necropolises with rich funerary trappings, including gold rings and belt buckles (Figure 12.3).
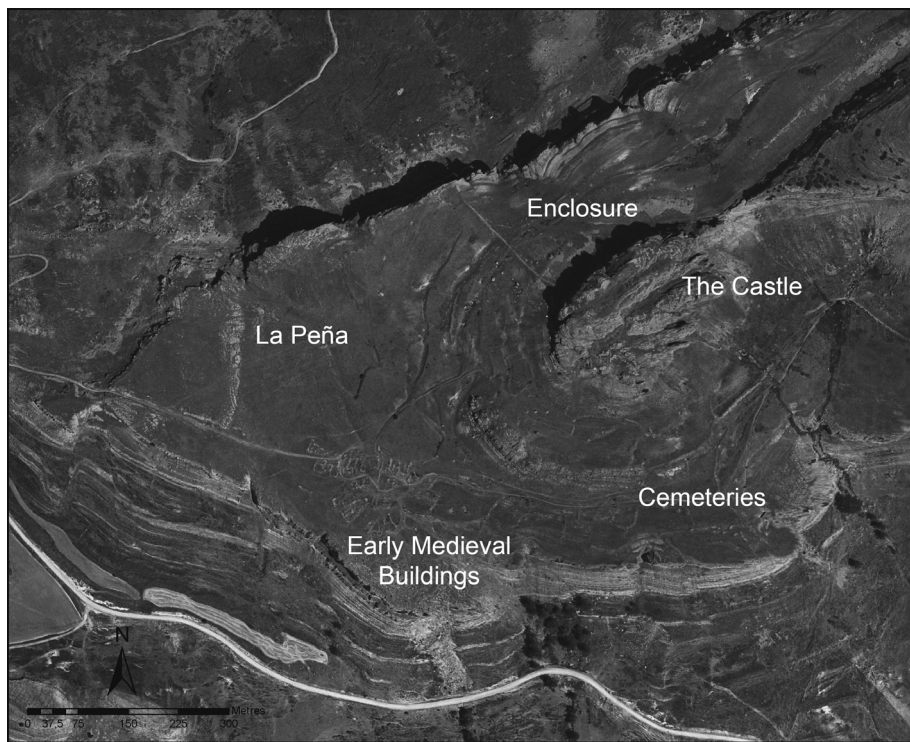
Figure 12.3. Peña Amaya (Sotresgudo, Burgos). Map by J. A. Quirós.

Figure 12.4. Cabezo de Navasangil (Ávila). Photo by J. A. Quirós.

A second group also reveals notable internal heterogeneity but is instead characterized by walled enclosures 2 ha to 10 ha in size (Figure 12.4). A distinction can be made between the castles with rudimentary walls frequently reusing old materials (Castro de San Esteban, Monte Cildá, Navasangil) and those with recognizable masonry techniques built by specialist craftsmen similar to those found in urban centres and with towers along walled sections (Tedeja, Castro Ventosa, Bernardos).

A third group is made up of smaller fortifications of 1 ha as, for example, at Poza de la Sal (Aratikos 2006) and Yecla de Silos. In the case of castles in this group, no marked internal spatial hierarchy has been found. Also eligible for inclusion in this group are other examples of hilltop occupation, which are not walled and seem to characterize sites of a peasant nature.

The reutilization characterizing the building of these walled enclosures is evident at certain sites, such as that of Monte Cildá (where approximately forty early medieval gravestones were recovered), or the castle of Muelas de Pan in Zamora (sixty-three funerary stela and other diverse works of Roman workmanship were recovered). Various specialists have analysed this phenomenon, especially in the case of urban fortifications. A symbolic nature is difficult to accept, as these stones are frequently hidden from view, while a functional interpretation suggesting a lack of building materials has been dismissed by scholars like Gian Pietro Brogiolo and Sauro Gelichi (Brogiolo and Gelichi 1998: 105). These authors hold that the use of these reused materials is part of unitary projects with a high constructive level, so we should exclude political instability
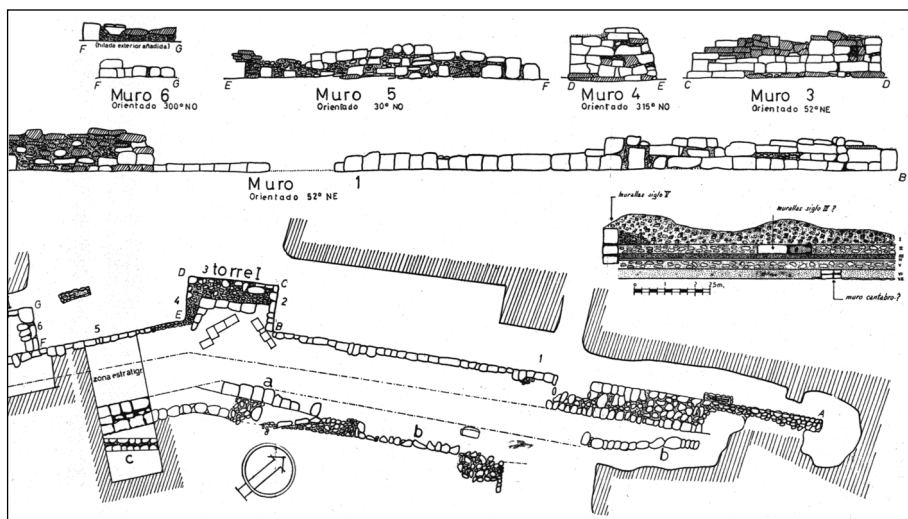
Figure 12.5. Walls of Monte Cildà (Olleros del Pisuerga, Palencia). Plan by M. A. García Guinea.

when interpreting these sites. The existence of a military contingency as the basis of processes, such as the refortification of Peña Amaya or the construction of the Monte Cildá enclosure, is but one feature of the creation of a system of *castrum* territorialities and could be related to the militarization of the aristocracy, as has been recently set out by Chris Wickham (Wickham 2005: 158).

One of the most relevant cases is Peña Amaya (Sotresgudo, Burgos), a hilltop site of *c.* 43 ha with an occupation sequence from the late Neolithic period to the early Middle Ages. The place is well known due to written evidence and was one of the sites conquered by Leovigildo in 574 in his encounters with the Cantabrians in the context of the consolidation of the kingdom of Toledo. In the final stages of the Visigothic period it was the episcopal see and also one of the first localities to be occupied, first, by the Muslims and, subsequently, by the Asturian kingdom in the course of the eighth century. Surveys carried out to date, insufficient to understand a site of this complexity, have revealed traces of a walled enclosure of *c.* 32 ha, whose northern section was built using recycled material probably in the late antique period, although no open area excavations have yet taken place. In the so-called Peña, a district of a little less than 2 ha, late antique occupation was identified below high medieval levels, containing two underground storehouses with fill containing TSHT. Also found in this sector was a gold signature ring and several belt buckles, which did correspond with a funerary area in use over that period. At all events, a church with a necropolis
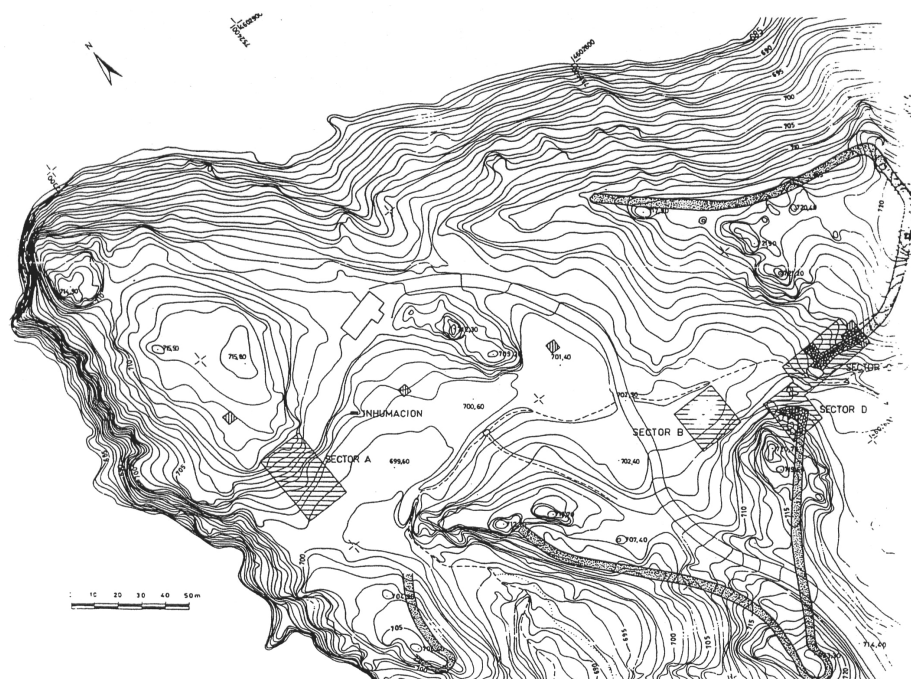
Figure 12.6. Plan of Castillo de Cristo de San Esteban (Muelas de Pan, Zamora).
Map by J. Nuño and A. Domínguez.

containing slab tombs or simple graves was subsequently erected on this area. The site at El Castillo, however, has so far only revealed proto-historical occupation of the Roman conquest and high medieval period (Alacet Arqueólogos 2001; Alacet Arqueólogos 2002).

Another important site is Monte Cildá (Palencia), identified with Vellika (Figure 12.5). It is situated approximately 10 km in a straight line from Peña Amaya, and excavations carried out in the 1960s revealed early imperial occupation. The site was reoccupied in the fifth century when a major walled enclosure with square towers was built with reused materials. This wall enclosed an area of 10 ha in the north, within which buildings were located, although it was only partially excavated. Among ceramic materials found in the walls of particular note are the *Meseta* imitations of TSHT (stamped ceramics), which characterize the fifth century and which have been found at many *castrum* sites (García Guinea, González Echegaray, and San Miguel Ruiz 1966; García Guinea, Iglesias Gil, and Caloca 1973).

Another important site is Cristo de San Esteban (Muelas del Pan, Zamora), a 4.25 ha fortification located on a hilltop occupied in proto-history, delimited by a 650 m long enclosure of rough unmortared stones assembled in a hurried fashion. The wall has been repaired on various occasions. Inside the enclosure, where an important collection of arms was unearthed, three stone dwellings were excavated with spaces dedicated to craftwork and cereal storage; several empty spaces were likewise documented (Figure 12.6).

At other sites, there is little information on the urban patterns present inside, although wherever structures are found (Bernardos, Las Merchanas), an element of planning dictated by the walled enclosure can be suggested (Nuño González and Domínguez Bolaños 2001). These castles frequently have a cemetery beyond their walls (e.g. Las Merchanas, La Morterona, Yecla de Yeltes, Herrera, Simanas) (Martín Valls 1973; Martín Valls 1983; Martín Valls 1982; Maluquer de Motes 1983; González Salas 1945). And many are likely to have had a certain demographic importance, although some authors question this aspect (Wickham 2005: 479).

Castles and the Articulation of the Territory

An aspect central to the understanding of the meaning and working of these castles is their distribution pattern and their relationship with other elements of territorial articulation. To be precise, there are three levels on which this territorial reorganization can be analysed: the location of castles and towns, that of castles and *villae*, and that of castles and villages.

Firstly, it must be pointed out that the presence of castles is greater where the collapse or contraction of the urban network was more intense and, consequently, where there was a more pronounced administrative change of scale after the fifth century. In the Duero Basin and, in general, in the *Meseta*, the rate of urban abandonments in the course of the late Middle Ages was around 70 per cent, by far the highest in the whole of the Peninsula. It is therefore not unrealistic to relate hilltop occupations with the fragmentation of late imperial urban territories. Indeed, the dimensions of these castles, on occasion perfectly comparable to those of a city, lead us to intense forms of territorial reorganization, probably within the framework of militarized elites. The castles previously characterized as first category are located in places where Roman cities appear to have collapsed precociously, or at a greater distance from urban centres. Those in the second group, on the other hand, are located on the fringes of urban districts, with a more limited capacity for territorial articulation. Thus, for example, the castle of Bernardos is located almost halfway between
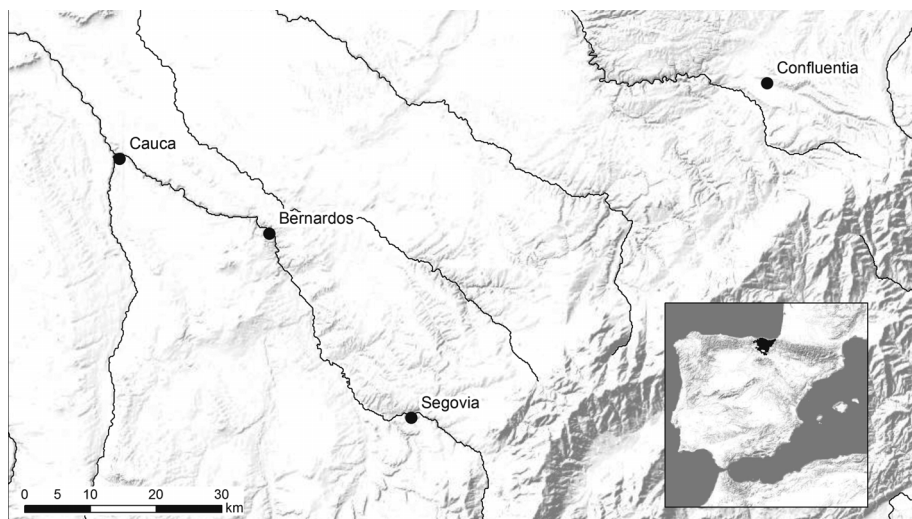
Figure 12.7. Location of Castillo de Bernardos in relation to the cities of Coca and Segovia.
Map by J. A. Quirós.

the Roman cities of Segovia and Coca, and that of Buradón *castrum* is located between Veleia, Vareia, Libia, and Tritium (Figure 12.7). These defensive sites appear to be castles that emerge on the fringes of urban territories when the latter cease to be hegemonic in the rural space, creating room for alternative power centres.

By contrast, in areas where the Roman urban network was less dense, such as the Cantabrian region or inland regions like the Alaban territory, the number of large castles was clearly marginal or non-existent. Here too, urban territories were disarticulated, but in this case their importance was less relevant in terms of the articulation of the territory. In the Basque Country, for example, there is almost no archaeological evidence of castles from the fifth to the seventh century, except for the Bilibio castle (Figure 12.8) located on the fringe of the territory on the banks of the Ebro.[3] There are several hilltop occupations, such as Portilla in Alava, where the existence of small-scale peasant occupation dating from the late fifth century has been recognized. In fact, Alava has

[3] In the case of the Bilibio castle there has, as yet, been no intervention in the castle itself (Unzueta and Martínez 1994). The castle of Aitziki in Bizkaia had also been dated to these centuries (García Camino 2002: 443–45), but its chronology has been recently revised (Azkarate 2004: 35).
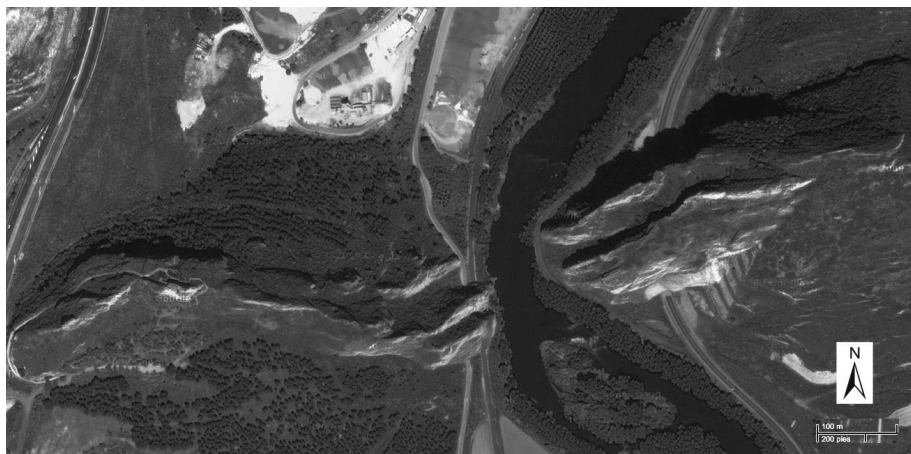
Figure 12.8. Castles of Bilibio (west) and Buradón (east), separated by the Ebro River.
Photo by J. A. Quirós.

numerous cases of hilltop occupations in which materials generically attributable to the fifth century have been found,[4] although in none of these cases have walled enclosures or elements that sustain *castrum* territoriality been identified.

Secondly, another important piece of data to understand the significance of these networks of castles is chronological correspondence between the abandonment of *villae* and the foundation of the castles and the spatial correspondence between the location of certain *villae* and castles (on the demise of the *villae* in Hispania, see Chavarria Arnau 2007). The relationship between the demise of the *villae* and other Roman settlements associated with aristocratic power can be seen in the numerous castles in whose proximity this type of late Roman occupation has been recognized (e.g. Bernardos (Gonzalo González 2007; Urbina Álvarez 2002), Navasangil (Caballero Arribas 2006), Castro de San Esteban, etc.). One of the cases in which this relation can be best established is that of the *villa* of La Olmeda and the nearby *castrum* of La Morterona (Saldaña, Palencia). Both sites, excavated in recent decades, exemplify the territorial transformations which took place in a long-term framework. In the excavation of the *castrum* of La Morterona, an occupation of Celtiberian ori-

---

[4] This is the case of Portilla (no. 3501), La Ermita (no. 3502), Santa Lucia (Gevara, no. 3503), Santtuste (Ocilla, Treviño, no. 3506), Kutzmendi (Vitoria, no. 3507), Los Castillos (Torre, Treviño, no. 3508), Ocio (Zambrana, no. 3509), Fuentepudia (Pobes, no. 3516), Buradón (no. 3517), Astulez (Valdegobia, no. 3518), Olivan (Salcedo, no. 3525), and Aldaya (Arrazua-Ubarrundia, no. 3528) mentioned in Llanos 1984.

gin which lasted until the third quarter of the first century AD (Abásolo and others 1984: 164) has been recognized. Seven kilometres to the south is the excavation of one of the most impressive monumental Palatine *villae* in all of Hispania, dating from the fourth century (de Palol 1988), built in the proximity of a probable late imperial *villa*. The abandonment of the palace in the fifth century is linked with the reoccupation of La Morterona, where a cemetery has been found. It must be pointed out, however, that Saldaña, a town situated at the foot of the *castrum*, was one of the mints used during the Visigothic reign in the sixth and seventh centuries.

Finally, it is equally significant to analyse the direct relationship that existed between castles and forms of occupation and exploitation of the countryside by the peasantry. One element currently being disclosed by recent archaeological intervention in the *Meseta* is that where the largest castles are concentrated and where the collapse of the towns had been more intense, a dense network of peasant villages was created from the beginning of the sixth century by parcelling out extensive areas from Madrid to Avila and from Valladolid to Zamora. In recent works, the creation of this network of villages has been related to the affirmation of subregional elites or ones which dominated important territorial spheres. This process was most immediately reflected in the creation of a new system of exploitation and occupation of territory. These villages, characterized by intensive farming of cereals of breadmaking quality and their integration with sedentary animal husbandry, reveal evidence of yield production generated for consumption by elites residing outside the villages (Quirós Castillo and Vigil Escalera Guirado 2006; Ariño Gil 2006; Quirós Castillo 2009a). At least in the Duero Basin, we believe that it was precisely the castles, and other rural power centres indicated by churches or other kinds of holdings, where elites would have been found, circumstantially linked in centralized political formations, like the Suevic and the Visigothic states.

On the other hand, in places like the Basque Country that lack significantly large castles, there are no dense networks of villages similar to those documented in the *Meseta*. Villages existed in the sixth and seventh centuries, but were only one of the possible ways to occupy and exploit space, and were probably not the dominant ones. In this territory, however, we were able to establish notable heterogeneity for this period in the frequent existence of cave occupations varying in nature (pastoral, agricultural, funerary, etc.) or by the existence of small scattered farms. In other words, in the Basque Country, there was a lack of state initiative or local elites which would have promoted intensive exploitation systems to generate income, and this would have been reflected in the network of villages (Quirós Castillo and others 2009).

In order to explain the role of these castles, therefore, it is necessary to analyse territory in systemic terms, assessing the relationship existing at several levels taking into account geographical variability. Resorting to criteria involving the militarization of society or of elites as the only explanatory criteria, or claiming state disintegration or Germanic invasion as the factors that triggered such profound transformations does not appear to be a very productive approach.

The creation of networks of villages and the proliferation of castles is the result of a redefinition of forms of power in the fifth and seventh centuries. The *castrum* system responds to a logic based on the affirmation of local powers which, as Santiago Castellanos and Iñaki Martín Viso have convincingly traced, gained prominence following the disarticulation of the imperial system (Castellanos and Martín Viso 2005). Yet the importance of local elites was extremely varied in the territories we have analysed. In significant areas of the *Meseta* castles were responsible for articulating local powers, which, on occasion, acted as true extensions of the state apparatus, or even as the backbone of the Visigothic state's taxation system (Martín Viso 2006a). It is evident, however, that it was not possible for these territorial powers to develop in such a stable and hegemonic fashion in all territories. This would have generated a permanent renegotiation of status and a pronounced social competitiveness. As has been suggested by Guy Halsall among others, cemeteries are one of the scenarios where this social conflictivity is more patently obvious (Hallsall 1995).

Castra in the first and second categories ended up almost as urban centres in functional and territorial terms. Although we do not know the occupational density inside these *castra*, especially in the case of the larger ones, and it is not known if an urban system with significant empty spaces predominated, like the ones documented in practically all of the similar *castra* in the South of France or Italy (Cagnana 2001), some of these castles are much larger than the city of Recopolis founded in 578 by King Leovigildo in the Tagus valley (16.5 ha) (Olmo Enciso, and others 2008).

Castles like Peña Amaya and perhaps Oca might have been episcopal sees in the late Middle Ages, although not all authors concur about the location and interpretation of the sources. Indeed, we can suggest the existence of true hierarchies among the different castles and in relation to urban centres. Amaya is located in a central position with respect to the other *castra* like Monte Cildá or Herrera (there is a distance of about 10 km between them), which is why it can be suggested that there is a certain hierarchical structure between them.

In addition, we know that these powers were articulated not only through *castra*. Thus, for example, one of the best known cases is that of Diego Álvaro

(Avila). The rich collection of well-preserved slates, recently studied by Iñaki Martín Viso (Martín Viso 2006a), shows us a rural holding linked to state taxation without the need for a *castrum*. It has also been proposed that the monumental churches located in the *Meseta* attributed to the seventh century (whose chronology is subject of debate among the different specialists) can likewise be identified with territorial elites, in this case following models documented in other European regions (Caballero Zoreda 2000).

The demise of these 'first-generation' castles varied. Some, like Navasangil, Patones, Cristo de San Esteban, and Castro Ventosa, appear to have died out during the course of the seventh century or beginning of the eighth century. This could link a priori the success of these *castra* with that of the Visigoth state itself.

Others, such as Castro Siero, Tedeja, Peña Amaya, and Buradón, and in general those situated north of the Duero, survived and frequently became district centres upon which the political formations of the north would be articulated during the eighth and tenth centuries.

'Second-generation' Castles in the North-Western Part of the Peninsula (Eighth to Ninth Centuries)

A profound reorganization of rural space from the end of the seventh century to midway through the eighth century has been identified in the whole of the north-western part of the Iberian Peninsula, the significance and consequences of which have been the object of analysis in recent years. Despite the fact that preserved written testimony began to reflect the construction of this landscape in Castilian and Leonese territory only from late in the ninth century and particularly in the tenth, archaeological finds oblige us to anticipate and reconsider the social bases of this process.

This period was marked by profound political and social changes, palpable in the remodelling of the territory. The Islamic occupation in 711 brought with it the disappearance of the Visigothic state and an accentuation of the fragmentation of the territory, which, in the medium term, implied a very intense transformation of the landscape in the south-central part of the Peninsula. There is consensus among specialists on the fact that, during the eighth century and up to the mid-ninth century, the Duero Basin was a space articulated around small, local-scale powers until such time as the Omeya state or the emergent kingdoms of the north effectively dominated this territory (Escalona Monge 2002: 73–77). Indeed, it was from the tenth century onwards when the forma-

tion of the County of Castile, and its expansion in the western sector, and the expansion of the kingdom of León under the reign of Alfonso III were consolidated with the transfer to León of the capital of the eastern kingdom (Gutiérrez González 1995: 87–122).

So far, with the odd exception, from the perspective of the archaeology of castles, the eighth and ninth centuries are the least-known period. This opacity is partly due to a lack of chronological visibility similar to that of the 'first-generation' castles (for example, the lack of TSHT), or to the fact that a 'third-generation' of castles founded after the tenth to eleventh centuries was the basis of the feudal kingdoms. Other authors identify this scarce visibility with the high degree of autonomy that villages in this period would have enjoyed (Gutiérrez González 2001a: 24). In any case, with the data currently at our disposal we appear to be observing a situation of marked regional variability.

In the Tagus Valley (more specifically in the area around Madrid) and in the immediate southern region of the Duero Basin, integration of the territory into the Andalusí dominion brought with it substantial territorial transformation. The majority of villages in the area around Madrid were abandoned towards 750, with only a few isolated farms remaining. Meanwhile, there was a concentration of settlement in proto-urban-type centres like Madrid, Talamanca, and Calatalifa (Quirós Castillo and Vigil Escalera Guirado 2006). Despite this knowledge, there is limited information on the transformations undergone by castles at this time. In the case of Bernardos, for example, the existence of a small hilltop occupation from the emiral period was detected, which suggests the presence of a small military-type garrison (Gonzalo González 2007: 104–05). It must be kept in mind that reuse by the emirate of centres of territorial articulation during the eighth and ninth centuries must have been common throughout nearly all al-Andalus, as was likewise observed in the case of cities like Recópolis. The collapse or abandonment of these structures in favour of a new territorial network took place during the caliphate in the tenth century (Olmo Enciso, and others 2008).

The northern sector of the Duero Basin, the upper Ebro Valley, and the Cantabrian region were the areas in which forms of local power, on different scales actively intervened in transformations of landscapes. It is noted that towards AD 700 dense networks of villages were founded in northern regions like Asturias, the Basque Country, and perhaps in Galicia, whereas in parts of the Duero Basin there is evidence to show that villages existing in the Visigothic period outlived it. It has been confirmed that after around 800–900 a process of construction of numerous churches in the heart of these villages was underway, an expression of local elites which gradually penetrated peasant communities.

The creation of village networks and territorial reconfiguration in this period must be related to the activity of certain elites who worked on a limited scale with respect to the powerful agents of the Visigothic period, but which had a more effective influence on peasant communities (Martín Viso 2002a: 537–39). The action of these elites needs to be related to the foundation from the eighth to ninth centuries of a new network of castles and fortified sites or the transformation of some of those already in existence, in line with the territorial redesign which we have seen in relation to the villages. It is important to point out that, although a large part of the *castra* from previous centuries survived, their role and significance was markedly different in this new social and political context. Some 'first-generation' castles which survived through these centuries became major head towns, and, occasionally, in written sources, were referred to as *civitates*. This is the case of Amaya, which was occupied very early in 712, as is narrated by several Arab sources and as is evidenced by the discovery of Arabic gold coins. Converted into an Islamic bastion, it was integrated by Ordoño I into the framework of the Asturian state power halfway through the ninth century. Subsequently, Amaya would become the headquarters of the *alfoz* or administrative districts existing in Castile from the ninth to twelfth centuries. We do not, however, have an adequate archaeological record to study these processes. The same occurred with other centres, like Tedeja and Buradón, which became the basis for territorial centres upon which the original county, and subsequent kingdom, of Castile were built.

Taking into account the geographical variability to which I have already referred, I shall analyse, by way of example, two important sectors: Asturias, where the main political structure of the north of the Peninsula was forged during the eighth and tenth centuries, and Castile, whose origin should be sought precisely in the pre-eminence that castles had in this territory during the late Middle Ages.

Asturias, a region of a little over 10,000 km², is situated between the Bay of Biscay and an impressive range of mountains which separates it from the *Meseta* in the middle of the Peninsula. Towards 718, a new political formation was created in the eastern region with its capital at Oviedo at the end of the century. Nevertheless, it was only with Alfonso III at the end of the ninth century that a mature state formation was established over a wider territory.

Current archaeological evidence (some cemeteries, isolated finds, and the survival of some late Roman centres, such as the *villa* of Veranes) is not explicit enough to understand the structure of Asturian territory during the sixth and seventh centuries (Diego Santos 1979; Fernández Ochoa, Gil Sendino, and Orejas Saco del Valle 2004). Indeed, it is not easy currently to explain the

structures on which the Asturian protostate was built in the eighth century. Nevertheless, in recent years a series of archaeological elements have helped us to understand certain aspects of the articulation of territory beyond the ecclesiastical complexes grouped under the category of 'Asturian pre-Romanesque' with regard to their stylistic features.

The most significant data come from fortifications, castles and other defensive systems which can be dated to the beginning of the eighth century,[5] although useful elements concerning peasant communities are now also being identified, such as the work carried out in Vega de Corao or cemeteries likewise dated to the eighth century, such as Chao Sanmartín in the western part of the region (Requejo Pagés 2004; Villa Valdés and others 2008). All of the available data tend to imply that in Asturias too a network of villages was created from the eighth century, within the framework of the social reconfiguration which took place after this period.

As far as fortifications are concerned, two main groups can be differentiated. First, in recent years defensive systems have been recognized in the Cantabrian Mountains separating Asturias from the *Meseta*, similar to the documented *clausurae* in several mountain passes in the late Roman period. More specifically, defensive systems have been recognized in the layout of the Via de la Mesa and the Via de La Carisa, namely, El Muro (Teverga-Somiedo) and Homón de Faro (Aller) respectively, which date from the eighth century, probably the first half (Camino Mayor, Estrada García, and Viniegra Pacheco 2007). In both cases, a structure of walls and pits obstructed passage by road, similar to crossing points documented in several ancient European and late medieval sources (Brogiolo and Gelichi 1996: 12), or those found in Les Cluses near the French-Spanish Pyrenean border (Castellvi 1999).

At Homón de Faro, two fortifications 100 m long have been found, the ends of which terminate in steep precipices. Excavations revealed two walls, one of which was 6 m wide divided into caissons and the other reinforced with timber bulkheads. On the western side stood a quadrangular tower and a cistern. Calyons used as projectiles were found in these constructions. Situated 25 km

---

[5] In addition to this proposal, it must be stated that several contexts have been dated using radiocarbon analyses which provide calibrated dates between the end of the seventh century and the beginning or middle of the eighth century. Keeping in mind the characteristics of the calibration curve corresponding to this period, and to the precision with which dates prior to 670 are calibrated, we need to consider that it is not possible to fine-tune to the decade using radiocarbon in this chronological zone, and that it is very likely that these dates refer to the entire eighth century (Quirós Castillo 2009b).

to the west is El Muro, where walls and pits blocked access to the La Mesa way. The presence of linear defences could be related to a desire to protect passages to the *Meseta* during the first half of the eighth century.

It is equally relevant to point out how, in the Asturian territory too, another series of castles of different dimensions were gradually realized. These castles formed the basic scheme of territorial planning during the dominion of the Astur kingdom as well as subsequent to it (e.g. Picu Jana, Soberrón, Soto del Barco, Peña Castiello).

Among the best studied is the castle of Curiel (Peñaferruz, Gijón), documented as the headquarters of a royal *intendant* in 1158 (Gutiérrez González 2003). Excavations have shown that it was founded in the late Middle Ages, between the eighth and ninth centuries. Founded under the Asturian monarchy, in its first stage the castle was demarcated by an oval walled enclosure accessed through a monumental door made from a recycled sarcophagus and ashlars. Inside the enclosure, domestic occupation and a possible forge were found, with a cistern outside the walls. In social terms, the consumption of adult animals and material culture rule out aristocratic occupation. The fortification, which covered an approximate area of 1600 m², was refurbished just before AD 1000 with the addition of a rectangular tower replacing the former door. From this time various indicators point towards stately occupation. The late medieval castle should therefore be interpreted as a power centre, although with a limited capacity for drawing rents.

The configuration of local powers linked to Asturian proto-estate structure can likewise be analysed at another site excavated in recent years at Gauzón (Peñón de Raices, Castrillón). Located on the coast, on the left bank of the Avilés estuary, this castle appears to have been closely associated with the Asturian monarchy from an early date (Figure 12.9).[6] In the castle itself, founded in 908, a famous piece of Asturian gold and silverware, known as the Victory Cross (after an inscription on the cross itself) was found. Inside the castle was a church dedicated to the Holy Saviour which, according to late medieval sources, was consecrated by several bishops documented in the last decade of the ninth century. The first results provided by the excavation of the castle have helped to establish the existence of a first occupation dating from the eighth century associated with a walled enclosure.

---

[6] As for other coastal fortifications like that of Soto del Barco or that of Peña Castiello in Villaviciosa, or inland ones like those of Tudela or Buanga.

Figure 12.9. Gauzón Castle (Castrillón, Asturias). Photo by I. Muñiz and A. García.

In summary, we can conclude that in a territory like Asturias, which has so far provided no significant evidence of a marked aristocratic territoriality during the sixth century (as opposed to what can be observed in the *Meseta*), a deep change occurred during the seventh and eight centuries, in keeping with the progressive planning and consolidation of the kingdom. It must be pointed out, however, that although the formation of the state was consolidated well into the eighth century and, in an extra-regional sphere, in the ninth century, we have evidence of clear territorial planning revolving around both the castle systems and the construction of village networks from the first half of the eighth century.

Our second example is afforded by the Castilian sector. The upper Ebro Valley or *Castella Vetula* is a territory covering approximately 800 km² corresponding to the northern section of the province of Burgos, the southern part of Cantabria, and the western part of Alaba, and is a mountainous sector arranged around the Ebro and its tributaries. Unlike the previous territory, we have a more limited archaeological record, partly compensated by that from peasant settlements. The sixth and seventh centuries in the upper Ebro Valley are characterized by the existence of local resident powers in the old cities as well as in the network of 'first-generation' castles, other centres of aristocratic power (e.g. the regions of Mijangos, Oca, Parpalinas, or Tudejen which mark

Figure 12.10. Aerial view of Tedeja Castle (Trespaderne, Burgos). Photo by Aratikos Arqueólogos.

out the Ebro Basin, whereas, on the other hand, our knowledge is much more limited as regards structure, except in specific areas like the valley of Tobalina Valley (Peña del Mazo) or the Zadorra basin (Martín Viso 2002a). The picture we can propose for this part of the peninsula, therefore has analogies with the Duero Basin.

The formation of the county of Castile towards AD 930 should be interpreted in terms of the consolidation of the pre-eminence of one family over existing local powers in the upper Ebro who appear in documents with the title of counts. In fact, Fernán González, the first count of unified Castile, took on the title for several counties in the territory. Castilian counts appear in documents as ruling castles that were county heads (Lantarón, Lara, Burgos) or different types of territories (Tedeja).

Very few castles have been excavated which provide useful indicators of occupation in the eighth and ninth centuries. An exception is Tedeja (Trespaderne, Burgos), a 'first-generation' fortification founded in late antiquity at whose feet *Santa Maria de los Reyes Godos* church was built (Figure 12.10). The fortress is

located on a 718 m high hilltop overlooking the gorge of La Horadada crossed by the river Nela, which flows into the Ebro. The castle is demarcated by a walled enclosure covering an area of approximately 8 ha. So far archaeological interventions have concentrated fundamentally on the western section of the walled enclosure and on structures attached to the walls. More specifically, the excavation led to the discovery of a 215 m long masonry wall, 1.8 m wide, articulated in several semicircular towers. Archaeological analysis has helped us recognize the existence of at least four main stages which must have developed in the late Middle Ages. Although this sequence has yet to be dated in absolute terms, two radiocarbon dating measurements obtained in the process of the excavation of the northern door (fifth century) and of the southern section of the walled enclosure (eighth and ninth centuries) lead us to believe that the 'first-generation' castle was restored or transformed in the period when the counties that preceded the unification of Castile were consolidated (Aratikos 2009; Bohigas, Lecanda, and Ruiz Vélez 2000). It is very likely too that some of the more recent transformations documented in *Santa Maria de los Reyes Godos* church, located at the foot of the castle, can be ascribed to this period, as ceramic material which can be dated to these centuries has been recovered (Lecanda 2003).

The case of Tedeja is very similar to the Bilibio castle (Labastida, Alaba), a 'first-generation' castle that appears in tenth century sources associated with the Castilian county. Although the castle as such has yet to be excavated, at its foot a church, completely reformed in the tenth century (Unzueta and Martínez 1994), has been recognized. In other cases, such as the castle of Lantarón (Sobrón, Alaba), no archaeological interventions have been undertaken, and it is believed to be a new fortification built in the late Middle Ages as a result of the evolution of a new greater power (Martín Viso 2002a: 540).

The process of construction of the county territory in the Ebro Valley unfolded on bases differing greatly from those existing in the Asturian territory, although their development was relatively similar. During the sixth and seventh centuries, the upper Ebro Valley was already marked out by systems of 'first-generation' castles, frequently with large dimensions, similar to those documented in the upper Arlanza Valley or Pisuerga, where village settlements like Amaya, Monte Cildá, or Herrera del Pisuerga were located. What occurred in this territory after the eighth century was a transformation in the scale at which the elites operated, implying a greater density of the population centres of local power. Although we still do not know how these elites operated from the archaeological record for this period, and written evidence is not explicit in this respect, it is probable that the aristocracies operated on a more limited

scale with respect to the previous period but with greater capacity to domi-
nate at a more local level. The consolidation of the counties recorded in texts
from the ninth and tenth centuries and the progressive affirmation of Fernán
González would merely be the result of a long process of territorial maturation
created on new bases. Although some castles were 'reused', they were now part
of a very different system.

On short, the examples from Asturias and the upper Ebro Valley show us two
different ways by which new state formations which would take centre stage
after the tenth century emerged.

'Third-generation' Castles in the North-Western Part of the Peninsula (Tenth to Eleventh Centuries)

The first decades of the tenth century saw the consolidation of the state struc-
ture of the kingdom of León in the west and in the county of Castile, which
would reach the category of kingdom in the eleventh century in the east. The
consequence of the formalization of these political structures was the political
restructuring of the territory and the consolidation of a mosaic of districts or
alfoz (Estepa Díez 1984), which are known from written evidence. Castles and
different-sized fortified centres were frequently at the head of these *alfoz* and
were run by the king's representative. At all events, it must be remembered that
not all the castles were *alfoz* headquarters, and not all the *alfoz* had a castle in
their head town (Pastor Díaz de Garayo 1996: 201–18).

On numerous occasions, existing castles were incorporated into this new
territorial organization (Escalona Monge 2006). At other times, however, the
change in scale implied by the new reality of territorial power resulted in a mod-
ification of the main hierarchical centres. For example, in the case of Castile, it
has been demonstrated that the castle of Lantarón ('second-generation') was
replaced in political terms by that of Término (Martín Viso 2002a: 549–50).
On the other hand, in the Astur-Leonese sector, a greater continuity of 'second'
and 'third-generation' castles is observed.

As an example of these transformations, we shall analyse the territory of the
present-day Basque Country, which is a very significant example of the reor-
ganization of territory at the dawn of the year one thousand (Figure 12.11). In
the Basque Country, almost forty castles are known with certainty, although
there are very likely more. Very few cases can be dated back to the first centuries
of the late Middle Ages and be identified as first-generation castles or second-
generation castles, with the vast majority of fortified sites being founded in
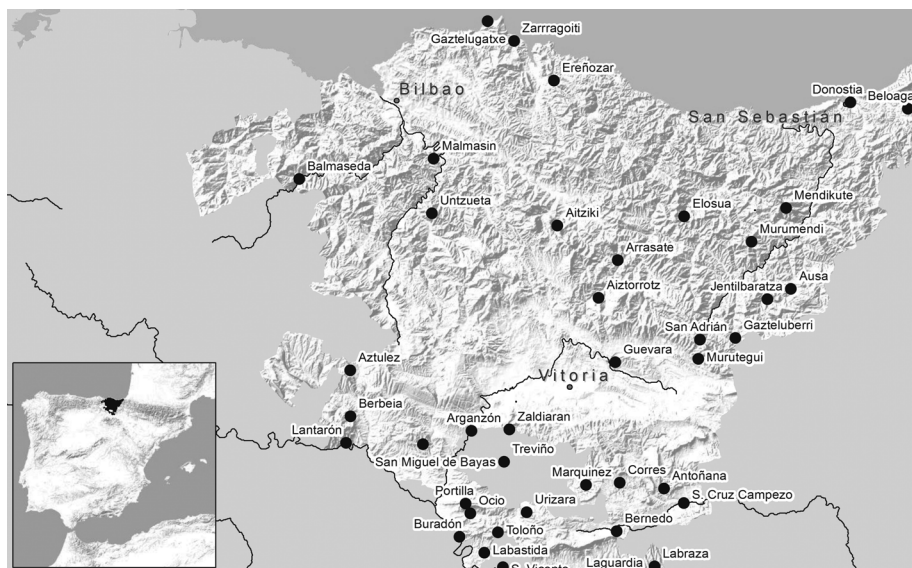
Figure 12.11. Map with the late medieval castles of the Basque Country. Map by J. A. Quirós.

the tenth and eleventh centuries. Most of these castles are known because they appear, usually fleetingly, in written sources from the High Middle Ages, which have helped locate these settlements with the aid of toponyms. Consequently, it may be that some fortified sites not reflected in the written record have yet to be identified (a recent essay about Basque castles is Solaun and Plata 2009).

Only parts of these settlements have been the object of archaeological excavations, but the records currently at our disposal have so far failed to help recognize occupation dated to before 900. This is perhaps due to the fact that the castles around which high medieval kingdoms are organized territorially — which are the ones that generate texts containing toponyms — are politically articulated precisely around the year 1000.

In material terms, most of the castles that have been excavated or studied in recent years (Untzueta, Ereñozar, Aistxiki, Mendikute, Ausa Gaztelu, Ocio, and Murutegui) are located high up on steep hilltops from which they dominate large territories. They are small castles, with an enclosure of limited dimensions in which there is usually a tower and cistern excavated in the rock. They are 'symbol' castles, as, rather than having an offensive function, they serve to mark territory, built to be seen from the villages, passes, and roads rather than to dominate them militarily. It must be pointed out that this type of castle is

frequent in the entire Cantabrian region, where there have been territorial studies, although few have been the subject of excavations.

One recently excavated site is that of Untzueta (Orozko, Bizkaia), located on the top of a 766 m high hill, which dominates the course of the Nervion river (Solaun and Hidalgo 2009). It occupies an elongated, 37 m × 19 m platform and has an irregular morphology, due to the fact that it has had to adapt to the surface of the hilltop. The castle, founded in the second half of the twelfth century, is made up of a rectangular, 17 m × 11 m tower, a cistern, and a perimeter enclosure that encompasses the aforementioned structures. Its structure is similar to other sites (Ocio or Astúlez) elsewhere in the Basque Country, which can be dated to the tenth century (Figure 12.12).

As pointed out previously, on occasion these castles were territorial central places and the seats of royal tenures, but excavations carried out in these settlements (or in similar Cantabrian or Asturian ones) have, as yet, failed to reveal the existence of aristocratic residences of these *intendants* who obviously did not live in the castles. Neither are the meat consumption patterns typically aristocratic. In terms of territorial structure, the construction of these castles did not alter the structure of the village network created centuries before. Consequently, we can conclude that the greater part of these castles were not active agents in terms of the creation of feudal systems at local level. It was in fact in the heart of these villages that these forms of feudal dominion were conceived. The few written testimonies from the tenth century of the Basque

Figure 12.12. Astúlez Castle (Valdegobía, Álava). Photo by J. A. Quirós.

Country already reveal the heavy presence of seigneurial-type powers dominating portions of villages in an intense fashion.

As already mentioned, on the subject of the configuration of medieval societies in the north of the Peninsula, some years ago scholars put forward the possibility of employing the paradigm of *incastellamento*, defined in Lazio by Pierre Toubert and successfully applied in broad sectors of southern Europe (Toubert 1973). This paradigm analyses the seigneurial modelling of landscape by means of the creation of fortified villages that bring together the peasantry and help establish strong dominion ties of a feudal nature.

The greater number of scholars who have verified the existence of *incastellamento* in the case of the north of the Peninsula have come to the conclusion that it cannot be applied to our territory due to the fact that the castles never became significant demographic concentrations with the result that they failed to group together the population or to alter the ways of exploiting the territory. Furthermore, the castles did not become centres for collecting rents as occurred in the Mediterranean sector (Martín Viso 2001: 90, 105). Though this approach can be applied to the majority of the castles which have so far been explored in the Basque Country, and in general in the north of the Peninsula, it was recently found that a variety of situations exist that make it necessary to revise these conclusions.

A new archaeological project is currently being carried out in the castle of Treviño (County of Treviño, Burgos). The castle is located on a hilltop at an altitude of 688 m dominating the medieval town of Treviño, probably populated by the Navarrese king, Sancho VI in the year 1161 (Figure 12.13). The first village of Treviño was founded in the tenth century on the hilltop and gradually occupied its base, where the chartered town was created in the thirteenth century. An impressive moat demarcates the upper platform and a wall descends from this same platform to encompass an upper space covering over 12 ha. Recent excavations have detected the existence of seigneurial-type occupation at the turn of the first millennium, characterized by the presence of large silos for storing cereal far bigger than those observed in contemporary villages. Similarly, archaeo-zoological analysis has revealed meat consumption patterns of a seigneurial nature, clearly differentiated from the villages and even from other small castles, characterized by the predominance of young specimens and swine over bovine animals.[7]

[7] These data contrast with the fauna finds of Peñaferruz (Gutiérrez González 2003: 154). Whereas, in Treviño, swine and young ovicaprid dominate, in the case of the castle of Curiel,

Figure 12.13. Aerial view of Treviño's Castle (Condado de Treviño, Burgos). Photo by J. A. Quirós.

In the case of Treviño, which has analogies with other nearby 'settlement fortresses', like those of Bernedo, Labastida, or Portilla, we can safely speak of a seigneurial occupation and active forms of extraction of peasant surplus. Therefore, as is being demonstrated by the excavations of the terraces and dwelling spaces located under this upper platform, Treviño managed to become a magnet for aggregating the peasant population through the eleventh to twelfth centuries. Indeed, it was this existing demographic base of power that the Navarrese monarch availed to create the town of Treviño in the twelfth century. With these elements at hand, Treviño seems to show the existence of a process of *incastellamento* which has similarities with other processes documented in Europe. So far, it has not been possible to assess the importance and extension of these 'settlement fortresses', although there is reason to think that their relevance was notable in parts of the Duero Basin.

the order is reversed in favour of the ovicaprid (more than half the finds), but adult specimens are more frequent. This predominance of adults, with more importance given to the secondary products than to meat (apart from other indicators), allows us to rule out the possibility that this castle was an aristocratic residence in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

To sum up, in contrast to the proposals of other authors, 'settlement fortresses' played a significant role in the shaping of a feudal landscape in the north-west of the Peninsula (Martín Viso 2001: 103). It is evident that, towards the year 1000, in the whole of the north of the peninsula there was a transformation of political structures which brought with it the building of a network of new castles and the transformation of existing ones (Gutiérrez González and Suárez Manjón 2007). Although, quantitatively speaking, the 'symbolic castles' prevailed in the Cantabrian sector, in the upper Ebro and the Duero Basin, there is evidence for the existence of 'settlement fortresses' castles which played an active role in the political and social remodelling of the territory within the framework of the privatization implied by the affirmation of feudalism.

Conclusions

To conclude, it is necessary to point out that the archaeology of the rural world of the late Middle Ages in the north-west of the Peninsula has developed significantly as regards quantity and quality in recent years, and we are now at the stage where it is necessary to draw interpretative proposals. It is worth emphasizing that the main interpretative paradigms with which we work in order to explain the late Middle Ages were built on partial, episodic, and frequently belated written testimonies. However, it remains opportune to explain the results of excavations in the light of these paradigms or of the accounts of political and historical politics that marked the fifth to tenth centuries in our territory. In this respect, Chris Wickham in his recent synthesis pointed to the existence of a significant contrast between written sources and the material record relating to the early Middle Ages in Hispania (Wickham 2005: 229–30). This contrast, which substantially demonstrates the difference in the nature of the records and their episodic nature, should lead us to develop specific projects giving priority to strategic interventions at significant sites which help shed some light on the many dark areas related to the study of power and fortifications in the 'Dark Ages'.

Works Cited

Secondary Studies

Abásolo Álvarez, José A., and others. 1984. *Excavaciones en el yacimiento de La Morterona, (Saldaña)* (Palencia)

Alacet Arqueólogos, 2001. *Intervención arqueológica en el Castro de Peña Amaya (Amaya, Sotresgudo, Burgos). Campaña de 2001*, unpublished report deposited at the Servicio Territorial de Cultura de Burgos (Burgos)

——, 2002. *Intervención arqueológica en el Castro de Peña Amaya (Amaya, Sotresgudo, Burgos). Campaña de 2002*, unpublished report deposited at the Servicio Territorial de Cultura de Burgos (Burgos)

Alarcón, Juan Zapata (ed.). 2001. *Actas del II Congreso de Castellología Ibérica* (Madrid)

Araguas, Philippe (ed.). 1994. *Actas del I Congreso de Castellología Ibérica* (Palencia)

Aratikos. 2006. *Excavación arqueológica previa a la redacción del proyecto de restauración del castillo en Poza de la Sal (Burgos)*, unpublished report deposited at the Servicio Territorial de Cultura de Burgos (Burgos)

——, 2009. *Excavación y consolidación de la Fortaleza de Tedeja (Trespaderne. Burgos). Campaña 2008*, unpublished report deposited at the Servicio Territorial de Cultura de Burgos (Burgos)

Ariño Gil, Enrique. 2006. 'Modelos de poblamiento rural en la provincia de Salamanca (España) entre la Antigüedad y la Alta Edad Media', *Zephyrus*, 59, 317–37

Avello, José L. 1985. *Construcciones militares de la Edad Media en Asturias* (Oviedo)

Azkarate, Agustín. 2004. 'El País Vasco en los siglos inmediatos a la desaparición del Imperio Romano', in *Historia del País Vasco: Edad Media (siglos V–XV)*, ed. by Pedro Barruso Barés and José Angel Lema (San Sebastián), pp. 23–50

Barceló, Miquel, and Pierre Toubert (eds). 1998. *L'incastellamento: actas de las reuniones de Girona y de Roma* (Roma)

Bohigas Roldán, Ramón. 1999. 'La organización del espacio a través de la Arqueología Medieval. Veinte años de investigaciones', in *Encuentro de Historia de Cantabria en Santander los Días 16 a 19 de Diciembre de 1996*, 2 vols (Santander), I, 401–41

Bohigas, Ramon, José A. Lecanda, I. Ruiz Vélez. 2000. 'Evolución de las formas y funciones de la arquitectura militar romana en el Norte de Hispania: el caso de Tedeja', in *3º Congreso de Arqueología Peninsular*, ed. by Vitor Oliveria Jorge, 8 vols (Porto), VI: *Arqueologia da Antiguidade na Península Ibérica*, pp. 555–68

Brogiolo, Gian Pietro. 2005. 'Risultati e prospettive della ricerca archeologica sulle campagne altomedievali italiane', in *Dopo la fine delle ville: le campagne dal VI al IX secolo, 11. Seminario sul tardo antico a l'alto Medioevo, Gavi, 8–10*, ed. by Gian Pietro Brogiolo, Alexandra Chavarria Arnau, and Marco Valenti, Documenti di archeologia, 40 (Padova), pp. 8–9

Brogiolo, Gian Pietro, and Alexandra Chavarria Arnau. 2005. *Aristocrazie e campagne nell'Occidente da Costantino a Carlo Magno* (Firenze)

Brogiolo, Gian Pietro, and Sauro Gelichi. 1996. *Nuove ricerche sui castelli altomedievali in Italia settentrionale* (Firenze)

—— , 1998. *La città nell'alto medioevo italiano: archeologia e storia*, Quadrante, 93 (Roma)

Brumfiel, Elizabeth M. 1992. 'Distinguished Lecture in Archaeology: Breaking and Entering the Ecosystem — Gender, Class and Faction Steal the Show', *American Anthropologist*, 94, 551–67

Burch, Josep, and others. 2006. *Excavacions arqueològiques a la muntanya de San Julià de Ramis: el castellum* (Girona)

Caballero Arribas, J. 2006. *Informe de la intervención arqueológica en La Cabeza de Navasangil (Solosancho, Ávila)*, unpublished report deposited at the Servicio Territorial de Cultura de Ávila (Ávila)

Caballero Zoreda, Luis. 2000. 'La arquitectura denominada de época visigoda ¿es realmente tardorromana o prerrománica?', in *Visigodos y Omeyas: un debate entre la Antigüedad Tardía y la Alta Edad Media*, ed. by Luis Caballero Zoreda and Pedro Mateos Cruz (Madrid), pp. 207–48

Caballero Zoreda, Luis, and Pedro Mateos Cruz (eds). 2000. *Visigodos y Omeyas: un debate entre la Antigüedad Tardía y la Alta Edad Media* (Madrid)

Cagnana, A. 2001. 'Le strutture del castello. Planimetria, dimensioni, organizzazione degli spazi: un'analisi comparativa con i castra dell'Italia settentrionale', in *San Antonino: un insediamento fortificato nella Ligura bizantina*, ed. by Tiziano Mannoni and Giovanni Murialdo, Collezione di monografie preistoriche ed archeologiche, 12 (Firenze), pp. 101–17

Camino Mayor, J., R. Estrada García, and Y. Viniegra Pacheco. 2007. 'A propósito de las fortificaciones lineales ástures de El Homón de Faro (La Carisa) y el Muro (La Mesa)', *Territorio, Sociedad y Poder*, 2, 53–64

Castellanos, Santiago, and Iñaki Martín Viso. 2005. 'The Local Articulation of Central Power in the North of the Iberian Peninsula (500–1000)', *Early Medieval Europe*, 13, 1–42

Castellvi, J. M. 1999. 'Fortificacions de Les Cluses', in *Del romà al romànic: història, art i cultura de la Tarraconense mediterrània entre els segles IV i X*, ed. by Pedro de Palol (Barcelona), pp. 160–61

Chavarria Arnau, Aleaxandra. 2004–05. 'Romanos y visigodos en el valle del Duero (siglos V–VIII)', *Lancia*, 6, 187–204

—— , 2005. 'Dopo la fine delle ville: le campagne ispaniche in epoca visigotica (VI-VIII secolo)', in *Dopo la fine delle ville: le campagne dal VI al IX secolo, 11. Seminario sul tardo antico a l'alto Medioevo, Gavi, 8–10*, ed. by Gian Pietro Brogiolo, Alexandra Chavarria Arnau, and Marco Valenti, Documenti di archeologia, 40 (Padova), pp. 263–85

—— , 2007. *El final de las villae en Hispania (siglos IV–VII)*, Bibliothèque de l'Antiquité Tardive, 7 (Turnhout)

Davies, Wendy. 2006. 'Introduction: Community Definition and Community Formation in the Early Middle Ages – Some Questions', in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, ed. by Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 15 (Turnhout), pp. 1–12

Diego Santos, F. 1979. 'De la Asturias Sueva y Visigoda', *Asturiensia Medievalia*, 3, 17–60

Escalona Monge, Julio. 2002. *Sociedad y territorio en la Alta Edad Media castellana: la formación del Alfoz de Lara*, British Archaeological Reports, International Series, 1079 (Oxford)

——, 2006. 'Patrones de fragmentación territorial: el fin del mundo romano en la Meseta del Duero', in *Comunidades locales y dinámicas de poder en el norte de la Península Ibérica durante la Antigüedad Tardía*, ed. by Urbano Espinosa Ruiz and Santiago Castellanos (Logroño), pp. 165–200

Estepa Díez, Carlos. 1984. 'El Alfoz castellano en los siglos IX al XII', *En la España Medieval*, 4, 305–41

Fernández Mier, Margarita. 1999. *Génesis del territorio en la Alta Edad Media: arqueología del paisaje y evolución histórica en la montaña asturiana* (Oviedo)

Fernández Ochoa, Carmen, Fernando Gil Sendino, and Almudena Orejas Saco del Valle. 2004. 'La villa romana de Veranes: el complejo rural tardorromano y propuesta de estudio del territorio', *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 77, 197–220

Ferreira Fernades, Isabel C. (ed.). 2001. *Mil anos de fortificações na Península Ibérica e no Magreb (500–1500)* (Palmela)

García Camino, Iñaki. 2002. *Arqueología y poblamiento en Bizkaia, siglos VI–XII: la configuración de la sociedad feudal* (Bilbao)

García Guinea, M. A., J. González Echegaray, and J. A. San Miguel Ruiz. 1966. *Excavaciones en Monte Cildá: Olleros de Pisuerga (Palencia). Campañas de 1963–65*, Excavaciones Arqueológicas en España, 61 (Madrid)

García Guinea, M. A., José M. Iglesias Gil, and P. Caloca. 1973. *Excavaciones en Monte Cildá: Olleros de Pisuerga (Palencia)*, Excavaciones Arqueológicas en España, 82 (Madrid)

Gómez Becerra, Antonio. 1998. *El poblamiento altomedieval en la costa de Granada* (Granada)

González Salas, Saturio. 1945. *El castro de Yecla, en Santo Domingo de Silos (Burgos)* (Madrid)

Gonzalo González, José M. 2007. *El Cerro del Castillo, Bernardos (Segovia): un yacimiento arqueológico singular en la provincia de Segovia durante la Antigüedad Tardía* (Segovia)

Gutiérrez González, José A. 1995. *Fortificaciones y feudalismo en el origen de la formación del Reino Leonés (siglos IX–XIII)*, Historia soceidad, 45 (Valladolid)

——, 2001a. 'La fortificación prefeudal en el norte peninsular: castros y recintos campesinos en la Alta Edad media', in *Mil anos de fortificações na Península Ibérica e no Magreb (500–1500)*, ed. by Isabel C. Ferreira Fernades (Palmela), pp. 19–28

——, 2001b. 'La implantación feudal y las fortificaciones en los orígenes del Reino de León', in *La fortificación medieval en la Península Ibérica: actas del IV Curso de Cultura Medieval, Centro de Estudioa del Románico Aguilar de Campoo, 21–26 de septiembre de 1992*, ed. by Pedro L. Huerta (Palencia), pp. 81–100

——, 2002. 'Del *castrum* al *Castellum*: Los castros entre la Antigüedad y la Edad Media', in *Los poblados fortificados del Noroeste de la Península Ibérica: formación y desarrollo de la Cultura Castreña*, ed. by Miguel A. De Blas Cortina and Angel Villa Valdés (Navia), pp. 301–16

——, 2003. *Peñaferruz (Gijón): el castillo de Curiel y su territorio* (Gijón)

Gutiérrez González, José A., and Patricia Suárez Manjón. 2007. 'Castillos y fortalezas feudales en Asturias: metodología para su estudio', *Territorio Sociedad y Poder*, 2, 7–36

Gutiérrez Lloret, Sonia. 1996. *La Cora de Tudmir de la Antigüedad al Mundo islámico: poblamiento y cultura material* (Madrid)

Hallsall, Guy. 1995. *Early Medieval Cemeteries: An Introduction to Burial Archaeology in Post-Roman West* (Skelmorlie)

Hodges, Richard. 1982. *Dark Ages Economics: The Origins of Towns and Trade, AD 600–1000*, 2nd edn (London)

Huerta, Pedro L. (ed.). 2001. *La fortificación medieval en la Península Ibérica: actas del IV Curso de Cultura Medieval, Centro de Estudioa del Románico Aguilar de Campoo, 21–26 de septiembre de 1992* (Palencia)

Lecanda, José L. 2003. 'Cerámica tardorromana, visigoda y altomedieval en el alto valle del Ebro', *Sautuola*, 9, 301–14

Llanos, Armando. 1984. *Carta Arqueológica de Álava (Hasta 1984)* (Vitoria-Gasteiz)

Llovera Massana, Xavier. 1997. *Roc d'Enclar: transformacions d'un espai dominant segles IV–XIX* (Andorra)

Maluquer de Motes, Juan. 1956. *Carta Arqueológica de España: Salamanca* (Salamanca)

——, 1983. 'Excavaciones arqueológicas en el castro de Las Merchanas (Lumbrales, Salamanca)', *Pyrenae*, 4, 101–28

Martín Valls, R. 1973. 'Insculturas del castro Salamantino de Yecla de Yeltes: nuevos hallazgos y problemas cronológicos', *Boletín Seminario de Arte y Arqueología*, 39, 81–99

——, 1982. 'Las necrópolis del castro de Yecla de Yeltes: datos arqueológicos y epigráficos para su estudio', *Zephyrus*, 34–35, 181–202

——, 1983. 'Las insculturas del castro salamantino de Yecla de Yeltes y sus relaciones con los petroglifos gallegos', *Zephyrus*, 36, 217–31

Martín Viso, Iñaki. 2000. *Poblamiento y estructuras sociales en el Norte de la Península Ibérica* (Salamanca)

——, 2001. 'Riflessioni sull'incastellamento nella penisola iberica: la Castiglia del Ebro e la Transierra di Madrid', *Archeologia Medievale*, 28, 83–110

——, 2002a. 'Poder político y estructura social en la Castilla altomedieval: el Condado de Lantarón (siglos VIII–XI)', in *Los espacios de poder en la España Medieval: XII Semana de Estudios Medievales, Nájera, del 30 de julio al 3 de augosto de 2001*, ed. by J. I. de la Iglesia Duarte (Logroño), pp. 533–52

——, 2002b. *Fragmentos del Leviatán: la articulación política del espacio zamorano en la Alta Edad Media* (Zamora)

——, 2006a. 'Tributación y escenarios locales en el centro de la Península Ibérica: algunas hipótesis a partir del análisis de las pizarras "visigodas"', *Antiquité Tardive*, 14, 263–90

——, 2006b. 'Central Places and the Territorial Organization of Communities: The Occupation of Hilltop Sites in Early Medieval Northern Castile', in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, ed. by Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds (Turnhout), pp. 187–208

Nuño González, J., and A. Domínguez Bolaños. 2001. 'Aspectos militares del castro de Cristo de San Esteban, en Muelas del Pan (Zamora): un asentamiento en la frontera suevo-visigoda', in *Mil anos de fortificações na Península Ibérica e no Magreb (500–1500)*, ed. by Isabel C. Ferreira Fernades (Palmela), pp. 105–20

Olmo Enciso, and others. 2008. 'Recópolis y su justificación científica: la secuencia estratigráfica', *Zona Arqueológica*, 9, 65–75

de Palol, Pedro. 1988. *La villa romana de La Olmeda, de Pedrosa de la Vega (Palencia), Guía de las excavaciones* (Palencia)

—— , 2004. *El castrum del Puig de les Muralles de Puig Rom (Roses, Alt Empordà)* (Girona)

Pastor Díaz de Garayo, Ernesto. 1996. *Castilla en el tránsito de la Antigüedad al Feudalismo: poblamiento, poder político y estructura social del Arlanza al Duero (siglos VII–XI)* (Valladolid)

Quirós Castillo, Juan A. (ed.). 2009a. *The Archaeology of Villages in the Early Middle Ages* (Bilbao)

—— , 2009b. 'Las dataciones radiocarbónicas de yacimientos de época histórica: problemas y experiencias de análisis en contextos de época medieval', *Munibe (Antropologia-Arkeologia)*, 60, 313–24

Quirós Castillo, Juan A., and Alfonso Vigil Escalera Guirado. 2006. 'Networks of Peasant Villages between Toledo and Velegia Alabense, Northwestern Spain (5th–10th centuries)', *Archeologia Medievale*, 33, 79–128

Quirós Castillo, Juan A., and others. 2009. 'Arqueología de la Alta Edad Media en el Cantábrico Oriental', in *Actas del Congreso Internacional Medio siglo de Arqueología en el Cantábrico oriental y su entorno (27–30 noviembre 2007)* (Vitoria), pp. 449–500

Requejo Pagés, Otilia. 2004. 'El registro arqueológico en el territorio de Cangas de Onís (Principado de Asturias): producciones cerámicas tardías y altomedievales', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, 1st ser., 16–17 (2003–04), 479–539

Ruibal, Amador (ed.). 2005. *Actas del III Congreso de Castellología Ibérica* (Palencia)

Sancho, Marta. 2011. 'Santa Cecilia de Els Altimiris (Sant Esteve de la Sarga – Pallars Jussà): una iglesia rural entre la Antigüedad y la Edad Media', *Esglésies rurals a Catalunya entre l'Antiguitat i l'Edat Mitjana (segles V–X)*, ed. by Oriol Achón and others (Barcelona), pp. 187–95

Schneider, L. 2003. 'Nouvelles recherches sur les habitats de hauteur de l'Antiquité tardive et du haut moyen âge en Gaule du Sud-Est', *Les Nouvelles de l'archéologie*, 92, 9–16

Solaun, J. L., and J. Hidalgo. 2009. 'El castillo de Untzueta: una fortaleza del señor de Bizkaia', *Avnia*, 25, 27–45

Solaun, J. L., and A. Plata. 2009. 'Eaeko gazteluen plana / Plan de castillos de la CAV', *Arkeoikuska*, 8, 23–42

Torro Abad, J., and P. Ferrer Marset. 1987. 'Asentamientos altomedievales en el Pic Negre (Concetania, Alicante)', *I Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española*, ed. by Congreso de arquelogía Medieval Española (Zaragoza), pp. 129–47

Toubert, Pierre. 1973. *Les Structures du Latium médiéval: le Latium méridionale et la Sabine du IXᵉ à la fin du XIIᵉ siècle*, 2 vols (Roma)

Unzueta, M., and A. Martínez. 1994. 'Proyecto de variante y túnel entre las conchas de Haro y el cruce de Briñas', in *Arqueología de urgencia en Álava, 1989–1993*, ed. by Museo de Arqueología de Álava (Vitoria-Gasteiz), pp. 43–60

Urbina Álvarez, A. 2002. 'Hallazgo de dos pizarras con inscripción en el hábitat tardoantiguo del Cerro de la Virgen del Castillo (Bernardos, Segovia)', *Faventia*, 24.1, 135–44

Vázquez Álvarez, R. 2003. 'Castros, castillos y torres en la organización social del espacio en Castilla: el espacio del Arlanza al Duero (siglos IX a XIII)', in *Del Cantábrico al Duero: trece estudios sobre organización social del espacio en los siglos VIII a XIII*, ed. by José Ángel García de Cortázar (Santander), pp. 351–73

Vigil Escalera Guirado, Alfonso. 2009. *Escenarios de emergencia de un paisaje social y político altomedieval en el interior de la Península Ibérica durante la quinta centuria: cerámica, necrópolis rurales y castillos* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea)

Villa Valdés, Angel, and others. 2008. 'Avance sobre el estudio de la necrópolis medieval del Chao Samartín en Castro (Grandas de Salime, Asturias)', *Territorio, Sociedad y Poder*, 3, 57–84

Wickham, Chris. 2005. *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (Oxford)

Military Stress, Central Power, and Local Response in the County of Castile in the Tenth Century

Julio Escalona*

This chapter aims to explore the role of fortifications in the southern fringes of the county of Castile bordering the river Duero, a region well known for its intense military activity during the tenth century. The region and period provide an excellent case-study to address some of the issues addressed in other chapters of this volume, including the construction and function of defence systems and the response of local society to those developments. The Duero border is particularly interesting because of the suddenness of the processes that turned a distant, much fragmented periphery into a major military frontier of the Asturian kingdom against the caliphate of Córdoba. In the following essay, I will argue that tenth-century fortifications in this region are the result of a variety of inputs, some of which derive from centralized oper-

Julio Escalona is Senior Researcher at the Instituto de Historia, Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales-CSIC, Madrid.

ations while others respond to local initiatives, in a context of intense social change, largely triggered by military stress and incorporation into a larger-scale, more complex political system.

The Duero Basin in the Early Middle Ages:
From Post-Roman Fragmentation to the Asturian Expansion

The ending of the effective control exercised by the Roman state in the north-western quadrant of Iberia was abrupt. The region never achieved an economic or social development comparable to those of the richer areas of Baetica or the Mediterranean coastal lands, and much of its articulation depended on the resources and structures provided by the state (Escalona 2006). When those failed, in the first quarter of the fifth century, the impact was both sudden and intense: in about one generation a process of urban decline set in almost eve-rywhere, combined with the massive abandonment of villa sites, especially the grandest ones (Chavarría Arnau 2007). The recent boom in the archaeology of rural peasant sites is beginning to build the case for a wholesale reorganization of settlement and land-use, along the main lines of community links rather than evolving from the great landed properties, following the fifth-century cri-sis of late Roman landscape organization (Quirós Castillo and Vigil-Escalera Guirado 2006; Vigil-Escalera Guirado 2006). In parallel, the large urban ter-ritories of the Roman period became fragmented into smaller ones as most towns failed to keep control of their hinterlands, and smaller centres appeared, sometimes within reoccupied pre-Roman fortifications, sometimes within newly founded *castra* (see Quirós, this volume). The production and circula-tion of goods became similarly fragmented (Escalona 2006). The region's elites, thus, shrunk from their former urban scale to much smaller, unconnected net-works directly controlling very small territories and communities, but with lit-tle capacity to build power connections on a larger scale. Therefore, the for-mer urban network could hardly keep playing its crucial intermediary role of connecting central government with the local scale. This connection became increasingly dependent on the direct links that could be established between the state and a large number of obscure microregional aristocracies, perhaps by means of their participation in state affairs, such as taxation (Castellanos and Martín Viso 2005).

   The period between the mid-fifth and mid-sixth centuries was dominated by the almost total absence of a central power for those fragmented elites to interact with, especially on the eastern side of the Duero Basin. Not without
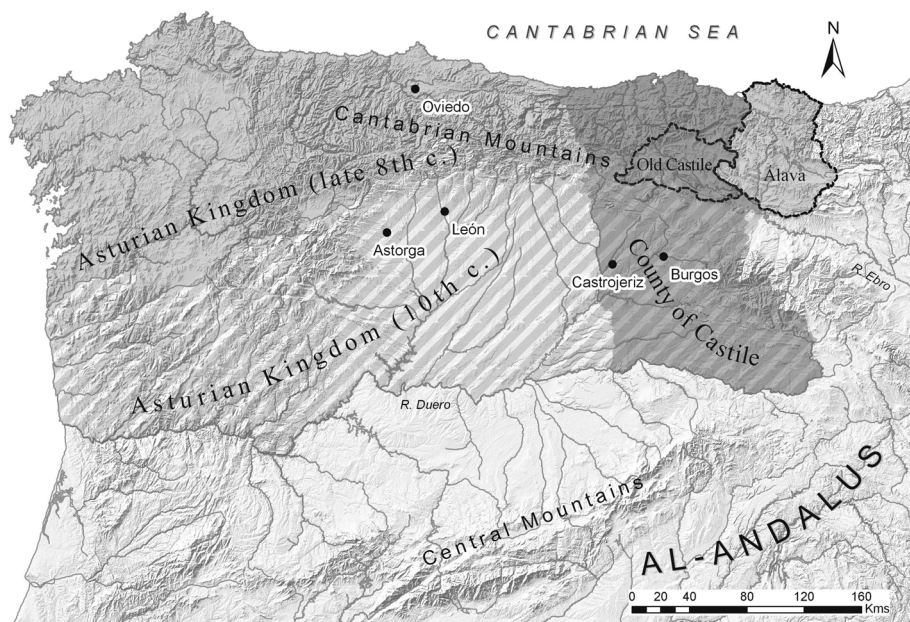
Figure 13.1. The expansion of the Asturian kingdom in the Duero Plateau, eighth to tenth centuries. On the eastern side, the territories of Álava and Castile are represented, the latter showing both its original extent and its expanded limits. Map by J. Escalona.

problems, the Suevic kingdom managed to control the westernmost areas and slowly create a small polity there, while the rest of the region remained a remote periphery, beyond the Sueves' reach, largely beyond Visigothic control too, and far away from the more dynamic areas of Baetica, Lusitania, or Tarraconensis, where cities — despite the damage caused by the disruption of their long-distance connections (Wickham 2005: 744–46; Carr 2002) retained some capacity to control their territories in a period with little or no centralized rule (Arce 2005: 213–34 and 279–80). The consolidation of the Visigothic monarchy at the end of the sixth century (including the conquest of the Suevic kingdom in 585) probably tempered the north-west's trend towards destructuration, but building stable exchange links between the central power and a large number of extremely heterogeneous small-scale powers was difficult (Martín Viso 2008), and the region remained largely inarticulate. During the eighth century a deeper crisis of central power started, following the destruction of the Visigothic monarchy by the Arabs in 711 and the latter's failure to develop stable political bases north of Iberia's Central Mountains, and thereafter the process of fragmentation soared to its maximum in the Duero Basin (Escalona 2006).

On the evidence of written sources — mainly the dry, ideologically charged, late ninth-century Asturian chronicles — it is possible to draw a sketch of political developments in Iberia's mountainous north from the mid-eighth century (Figure 13.1). By the last third of the eighth century, most territories north of the Cantabrian Mountains had seemingly become incorporated into a single polity dominated by the kings of Oviedo, although the foundations of such a convergence remain largely conjectural (Fernández Conde, Suárez, and Gutiérrez 1997), especially considering that until the ninth century very few advances by way of governance or territorial organization can be detected (Estepa Díez 2002). As of the mid-ninth century a strengthening of royal power becomes perceptible, with the articulation of a sphere of high-ranking aristocrats in the royal entourage (*comites*) and, perhaps, the appointment of territorial delegates (Estepa Díez 1992).

This process had military consequences. In the late eighth and early ninth centuries, when Carolingian involvement in Iberian affairs was at its highest (Fernández Conde 1997; Escalona 2004), the consolidation of the Asturian kingship meant a significant change in the peninsular power balance. Tellingly, the newly established Ummayad emirate started to launch military attacks from their strongholds in the middle of the Ebro Valley against their western neighbours, probably through the same passes that the old Roman road system had used to connect the Ebro Valley with the plateau. Whether the target was the kingdom's core or just to castigate the frontiers, the lands in the immediate vicinity of the Muslims usually took the first blows in every campaign (see detailed discussions of military strikes in Sánchez-Albornoz 1950; Martínez Díez 2004). More than fifty years after the beginning of continued warfare, we learn that in the eastern borders of the Asturian kingdom there were at least two different territories: Álava and Castile, of which the first seems to have been slower to integrate in the kingdom's structure (García de Cortázar y Ruiz de Aguirre 1997). As for Castile, originally it was a small area (later called 'Old Castile') in the mountainous north-eastern fringes of the Duero Basin (Martínez Díez 2004). By the mid-ninth century, Latin and Arabic texts begin to call this area 'land of castles' (Lat. *Castella*, Arab. *al-Qila'*, both meaning literally 'the castles', in the plural), and a passage in Alfonso III's *Chronicle* (880s) suggests that it had changed its former name from Bardulias to Castile: 'Barduliae quae nunc appelatur Castella' (*Chronicle* of Alfonso III, 14 (Gil Fernandez, Moralejo, and Ruiz de la Peña 1985: 132–33)). Whichever came first, both the Latin and the Arabic terms coincide in highlighting an abundance of castles in this small northern territory, of which Tedeja or Buradón (Figure 13.2) may be examples (see Bohigas Roldán and Lecanda Esteban
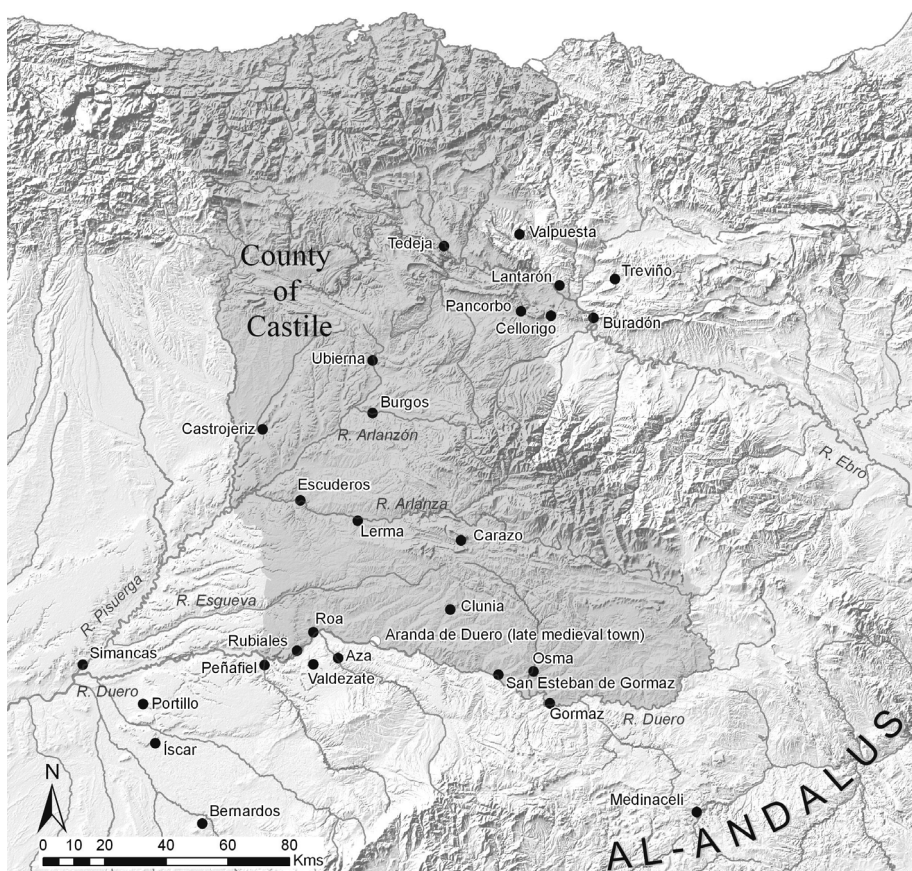
Figure 13.2. The county of Castile in the tenth century, showing the main places cited in the text.
Map by J. Escalona.

2000; Quirós, this volume). It is hard to be precise, though, whether the creation of those fortifications was an initiative of the Oviedo kings to protect their most threatened frontier or, instead was due to the region's elites, who, in the context of mounting military stress, sought to protect themselves and, conceivably, to gain royal favour by doing so. In whichever case, it seems clear that in the ninth century Álava and Castile were military targets for the Arabs chiefly because they had been incorporated to the Asturian kingdom as important frontier positions (Figure 13.1).

By contrast, no similar attacks are recorded in this early period in most of the plateau lands of the Duero Basin, which still remained beyond Asturian

control and therefore posed no threat to the emirate. In those areas, by lack of any centralizing power, whether Christian or Muslim, no large- or medium-scale polities seem to have existed. A retrospective reading of the process by which the plateau was incorporated into the Asturian kingdom in the late ninth and early tenth centuries strongly suggests that the region was dominated by a scatter of micro-territories which in many cases — but not all — provided the building blocks for the creation of the tenth-century network of administrative districts called *alfoces* (Estepa Díez 1984; Álvarez Borge 1993: 55–98; Martín Viso 2000: 128–30; Escalona 2002: 229–30). From the analysis of those districts, 100–150 km² seems a reasonable average size for the territorial units of the Duero Plateau. Their remarkably simple spatial structure consisted of just two hierarchical levels: the first being a scatter of rural settlements, usually centred around the second, which consisted of one higher-status settlement, normally a hilltop site. This is reminiscent of the late pre-Roman Iron Age socio-political articulation of the Duero Plateau, which, of course, means no 'Celtic revival' but rather a comparably small scale of socio-territorial articulation. Even though there is some evidence for social inequality in those petty polities, given their limited size and simplified economic and social structures, there was probably very little room for internal differentiation, especially for the elites. It seems likely that social interactions, as well as status and power relationships, mainly operated within a framework of community structures that largely conditioned their incorporation to the Castilian county in the tenth century (Álvarez Borge 1987; Álvarez Borge 1996; Escalona 2000–01). For much of the eighth and ninth centuries, those small-scale supralocal communities seem to have existed without becoming integrated into larger polities, although both the Asturian kingdom and the emirate may well have wielded influence beyond their respective borders — a sort of 'buffer effect' — perhaps attracting the plateau communities into some kind of cooperation. This could perhaps be reflected in some striking cases like the prominent fortification at Bernardos, in the province of Segovia (Gonzalo González 2007; Quirós, this volume) or the recently suggested pre-caliphal phase at the Gormaz castle, in the province of Soria (Almagro 2008) (Figure 13.2).

Changing Scales, Changing Horizons

The impact of the Asturian kingdom's expansion over the northern half of the Duero Plateau (Figure 13.1) can be considered at different scales (see a more thorough discussion of scale change in this region in Escalona and Reyes Téllez

2011). Between the mid-ninth century and the 880s the lands between the Cantabrian Mountains and the old Roman road that led from Aquitaine to the former Roman capital Asturica Augusta (Astorga, prov. León) were firmly incorporated, and *c*. 900 the lands down to the river Duero had been absorbed. This meant that the Asturian kingdom grew by roughly a factor of 2.2 from what it had been at the end of the eighth century. On the eastern side, the process was somehow delayed; the Castilian counts did not reach the Duero line until *c*. 912 (Figure 13.2). It was a dramatic change, nevertheless: the newly acquired lands meant a shift in the order of roughly ten times, compared with the mid-ninth-century district called Castile. However, this is a moderate leap compared with the intensity of the change when considered from a local perspective. The territorial horizons of the small-scale societies that occupied the lands between the rivers Arlanzón and Duero were in the order of 100–150 km^2 — to judge by the size of the smaller tenth-century *alfoces* —, and they suddenly became engulfed into a socio-political system more than five hundred times larger. Their whole cultural framework changed abruptly in the course of two generations, as they had to adapt to an entirely different social system that was itself quickly gaining complexity (Díez Herrera 1999).

If we first set the focus on Castile's highest social sphere, the period 880×930 stands out as one of dramatic transformations for the whole Castilian county, as it expanded southwards. The so-called *First Castilian Annals* (940s) provide a simplified, two-stage glimpse of this process: first an advance down to the river Arlanzón in the 880s, then another down to the Duero in 912 (Figure 13.2).[1] Despite the emphasis of written sources on royal initiative, the overall move — especially the second phase — is better understood in terms of an expanding aristocracy. Tellingly, the period that followed 912 was one of intense competition among aristocrats — the three counts of the 912 *Annal* entry and others — for control of the newly acquired lands and for supremacy within an expanded Castilian territory. The best example is probably Count Gonzalo Téllez, studied in detail by Iñaki Martín Viso (Martín Viso 2002; see also Escalona and Reyes Téllez 2011: 169–71). The ruler of a small area between Álava and Castile, where he held extensive rights over land, peasants, and resources, controlled monasteries and even had in his entourage the bishop of the small see of Valpuesta (Martín Viso 1999). Gonzalo Téllez took active part in the expan-

---

[1] *Anales Castellanos I* (Gómez Moreno 1915):
– s.a. 882: *In era DCCCCXX populavit Didacus commes Burgus et Auvirna pro iussionem domno Adefonso.*
– s.a. 912: *In era DCCCCL populaverunt commites Monnio Nunniz Rauda et Gondesalbo Telliz Hocsuma et Gundesalbo Fredenandiz Aza et Clunia et Sancti Stefani iusta fluvius Doyri.*

sion southwards and, in doing so, he became a magnate at the largest possible
scale in early tenth-century Castile. He added to his resources control over ter-
ritorial centres like the erstwhile Visigothic episcopal town of Osma; before
his death, *c*. 915, he founded or patronized monasteries and gained substantial
blocks of property in the surroundings of Burgos, the county's political centre.
This example illustrates how the highest Castilian aristocrats took advantage
of the expansion to transform themselves from subregional elites into large-
scale lords, military leaders, and great landowners, ever less like chieftains and
more like a feudal ruling class. This trend crystallized around 930, when some
kind of consensus terminated the previous phase of competition, and a single
leadership by Count Fernán González was established — not without some
resistance — in all of Castile and Álava. Thereafter, the tenth-century Castilian
charters yield the picture of an aristocracy of remarkably low political profile
— the counts appear to take all the credit for this — but mounting landed
interests, based not only upon landownership but also upon the control of a
growing class of dependent peasants (Estepa Díez 1989: 191–96, on lords-to-
peasants relationships).

When seen from a bottom-up perspective, the transformations look no less
dramatic. Inasmuch as we can envisage it, before the Castilian expansion the
small communities of the Duero border had a basically twofold social struc-
ture, of freemen and their elites. We cannot rule out the existence of unfree
people or small-scale slavery, but the evidence is thin (Martínez Díez 2007: esp.
587–92; Pastor Díaz de Garayo 1996: 280–88). Given these societies' very lim-
ited scale, it seems likely that members of the elite were also farmers themselves,
even if they had access to more lands and extra workforce by means of their con-
trol of kin relations and community leadership (Escalona 2000–01; Wickham
2005: 542–43). However, the overarching social system into which those areas
were incorporated after 912 was much more complex and unequal. Besides, for
the crucial generation that lived through the great changes of *c*. 910–30, the
convergence between both social systems created an outstandingly open period
in which hierarchies and individual positions were more open to negotiation
than they would be thereafter. For the regular farmers of the Duero borders
the options were limited. Their rural communities were very similar to many
others across the county, and their integration in the widespread class of free
landowning peasants seems rather straightforward. Alternatively, they could
become more directly subjected — whether collectively or individually — to
some higher lord (the counts, an aristocrat, an ecclesiastical lord) and join the
class of dependent peasants, a process that progressed continuously across the

tenth century and later. Instead, the options for the local elites were wider. If they stayed where they were, the most obvious choice was to remain within the community framework and become a part — arguably the upper, richer layer — of the free peasantry; but if things turned out badly, they could even end up as dependent peasants, especially in the rather infrequent case of local communities collectively subjected to one lord.[2] They could instead take action and seek a more favourable insertion into the new order. True, no petty leader of the Duero borders could stand comparison with aristocrats like Gonzalo Téllez described above, so there was no obvious pathway from local leadership to the large-scale aristocratic class. However, aristocratic power largely rested upon clientele networks that had to be resized after the expansion to reach the local contexts, which required cooperation from the localities, something that clearly rested in the hands of their elites.

For the communities of the Duero borders, the Castilian expansion meant subjection to a larger, more unequal socio-political system, but many of the impositions and burdens that landed on them could be seen also as opportunities for their local leaders to climb up the social ladder and join the lower ranks of the ruling class (see below). This possibility, however, was clearly not available to everyone, so it seems likely that a period of competition among local elites developed roughly at the same time that a similar struggle was going on among the aristocrats. Of the many elements that the new situation brought about, warfare probably meant the greatest resource for the local elites, which, by reinforcing their control over their communities, could appear as suitable collaborators before the counts and other aristocrats. It seems adequate, thus, to consider the different levels in which warfare affected the socio-political restructuring of the Duero borders in this period.

Warfare and Society on the Duero Border in the Tenth Century

By focusing on the newly created southern frontier of the Castilian county, we can observe how warfare and fortifications reflect the dialogue between levels of political articulation.

---

[2] This may be the process underlying the case of a woman called Mayor, from the Riojan village of Terreros, under the lordship of the abbey of San Millán de la Cogolla, who was defeated in court when she claimed noble status (Loring García 2005).

Major Fortified Strongholds

Perhaps the most visible aspect of this process was the creation of a number of major strongholds that eventually converged into a defensive network of which they became the leading nodes (Gutiérrez González 1995: 124–33; Gutiérrez González 2000). The earliest moments of this process on the Duero border are badly documented, but we can compare the situation with the case of Castrojeriz, rather far north from the river Duero, which was occupied and fortified in the 880s phase of expansion. The *Chronicle of Albelda* illustrates how in 882 the place, recently occupied by Count Munio Núñez, was plundered by a Muslim army before its defences could have been erected. The next year, a similar raid met a properly defended site that was able to resist:

> In the reign of the aforesaid prince [Alfonso III], in the era 920 [AD 882], the aforesaid Almundir, son of King Mohamed, was sent by his father together with General Abuhalit and a force of 80,000 men, and he proceeded from Córdoba to Saragossa [...]. This very army, having arrived at the borders of Castile, by the castle called Pancorbo, first laid siege to it for three days, but with no success [...]. Also Munio, son of Nuño, deserted Castrojeriz on the Sarracins' arrival, as it was not yet fortified enough. [The Muslims then proceeded to the vicinity of León.] [...]
>
> After that, in the era 921 [AD 883], which is the current year, the aforecited Almundir [...] with the whole army of Spain, was sent by his father to attack Saragossa [...]. Thereafter the same army entered our kingdom's territory and they first fought the castle of Cellorigo, where many of their lot were killed. Count Vigila defended this fortress. He then proceeded to Castile, to Pancorbo castle where he started the fight by his own accord, but after the third day he was defeated and had to leave it. Diego was the Count. He then found Castrojeriz well defended and he could not do anything there, and in the month of August he approached the borders of León.[3]

These passages illustrate the haste with which new fortifications were established in a frequently attacked area. Thirty years later, warfare had largely moved south to the river Duero border, where we can imagine similar processes taking place in the occupation of the defensive sites cited in the aforementioned *Annal* entry for AD 912: Aza, Roa, Clunia, San Esteban de Gormaz, and Osma (Figure 13.2). This move has been traditionally explained as a carefully planned operation commanded by King García, and carried out by three of his counts, leading to the establishment of a fully articulated defensive line

---

[3] Chronicle of Albelda, xv, 13: Gil Fernandez, Moralejo, and Ruiz de la Peña 1985: 178–80. English translation is my own.

on the river Duero (Pérez de Úrbel 1951: 142–44), but it is now rather seen as several separate initiatives — perhaps conflated into one single *Annal* entry — that only came to constitute an integrated defensive system after a period of adaptation. Before 965, the fortress of Gormaz may have played a leading role in the upper Duero, on the evidence of the emphasis of certain Arabic sources recording the deaths in battle of successive Gormaz rulers, that they call counts (Ibn Hayyan 1981: 230, 298, 326). By the same time, according to Ibn Hayyan, Lerma (on the river Arlanza backline) acted as an organizational centre for Castilian offensive operations:

> In his victory report of this campaign [the 934 raid against Castile, actually a major defeat for the Caliph] an-Nasr mentioned the regions of Álava and Castile he had crossed, among them [...] the big and well-built city of Lerma and its important surrounding plains, which was found deserted, and all palaces and churches in it were destroyed. This used to be the starting point for all of the enemy's raiding troops that were sent against the Muslims' country, and there they used to divide among themselves the booty and captives they took.
>
> (Ibn Hayyan 1981: 231 (English translation is my own))

After 965, when Gormaz was seized by the caliphate, other places like Peñafiel, Clunia, and Carazo became the main military centres of the frontier (see below). However, it is not clear that the same scheme already operated in the few first years after 912. In fact, Muslim attacks on the Duero line did not start immediately. The first raid recorded was on San Esteban de Gormaz in 917, followed by another on Osma, San Esteban, and Clunia in 920. Thereafter, military stress on the Duero borders became ever more frequent, concentrating in the periods 929–61 and 977–1002 (Escalona 2000–01; on the later phase see Isla Frez 2000). Nevertheless, the picture of a continued defensive line on the river Duero does not quite work, even in those particularly eventful periods, as the distribution of strongholds along the river seems to form not one line, but two clusters, one in the east and another in the west, with a gap in between around the modern town of Aranda de Duero (see Figure 13.2 and Escalona 2000–01). The next cluster is to be found further west in the area around Simancas, with fortified sites such as Íscar and Portillo (see Figure 13.2 and Escribano Velasco and Balado Pachón 2000).

Although most can be located as dots on a map (Figure 13.2), archaeological recognition of these major fortresses is still crudely underdeveloped (Quirós, this volume). The main difficulty is that most of them were long-lived as fortified sites, so the tenth-century defences — and whatever earlier structures they replaced — became largely masked by the bulkier castles of the cen-

tral and late Middle Ages. A traditional disregard for the early medieval period among archaeologists has also played its part. Thus, in highly relevant places, like Castrojeriz or Burgos, the best-recorded phases belong to the late medieval castles and the late prehistoric walled settlements that preceded them (Abásolo Álvarez and Ruiz Vélez 1976; Abásolo Álvarez, Ruiz Vélez, and Pérez 1983; Uribarri Angulo, Martínez González, and Leis Muñoz 1987; Escribano Velasco, Balado Pachón, and Pascual 2000: 775–76), while the early medieval phase is hardly investigated at all. The recently recognized early medieval phase of the fortification at Treviño, in northern Castile (Quirós Castillo 2011), so far lacks a comparable counterpart in the south of the county. Halfway between Burgos and the river Duero, fortified sites like Lerma or Escuderos (a deserted site near Santa María del Campo, Burgos), offer hardly any archaeological records at all. On the Duero line, most strongholds present similar problems. In the western cluster, in Peñafiel, much modified by the huge late medieval fortress there, only a preliminary recognition of early medieval material was done in the 1970s (Lucas de Viñas 1971). In Roa, where the medieval walled town overlays the early medieval site, most archaeological activity has concentrated on the late prehistoric *oppidum* beneath. Aza poses similar problems, although recent unpublished fieldwork suggests a remarkable change in settlement patterns following the organization of the frontier in the tenth century (Ángel Luis Palomino, personal communication). Less prominent sites, like Rubiales (San Martín de Rubiales, Burgos) have been recognized as probably belonging to the same group, but no large-scale excavation has been carried out (Reyes Téllez 1997). In the eastern cluster, the case of Clunia is especially striking. In the first century, Clunia was the capital of a *conventus iuridicus* that centralized the administration of most of the eastern Duero Plateau. The city experienced a sharp decline in the fifth century and seems to have played no relevant role in the Visigothic period (Cepas Palanca 2006). However, in the tenth century Clunia begins to be mentioned again as an important centre of the Duero border, of which it became the military capital in the later tenth century.[4] By this time, its location seems to have shifted from the great tabular promontory where the Roman town lay to a more modest elevation nearby, where the only fortified elements yet recognized belong to the ruins of the late medieval castle. The upper Duero Valley is the only section that provides a more coloured picture. In this stretch of the frontier there was continued contact between the

---

[4] As early as 920, Arabic sources describe a prosperous city, surrounded by a well-organized agricultural landscape (Ibn Hayyan 1981: 107).

Castilian county and the caliphate (Manzano Moreno 1991: 346–70). As the first consolidated its control north of the river, the latter intensified its military presence in the area, working from the regional centre of Medinaceli, and created a dense network of fortified sites and ancillary surveillance points. Between 965 and 1011 the main element on the Andalusi side was the huge fortification at Gormaz, which was their leading military centre and the basis of an offensive that led to the seizure of several Castilian strongholds in this area, like San Esteban de Gormaz or Clunia itself in 994 (Escalona 2000–01). The sheer prominence of the Gormaz defensive structures — together with a traditionally stronger emphasis on Islamic archaeology — explains why sites like Gormaz have been more thoroughly investigated than their Castilian counterparts (Gaya Nuño 1943; García Merino 1973; Almagro 2008). Likewise, a number of surveillance sites belonging to the caliphate's defensive network in this area have been recognized in the modern province of Soria (Zozaya Stabel-Hansen 1984; Zozaya Stabel-Hansen 2008).

Watchtowers

Even less is known of the defensive system surrounding each major fortress on the Castilian side. Although in recent times increasing attention has been paid to surveillance and alert systems on al-Andalus's north-eastern frontier (Martí Castelló 2008), very little research is available for Castile along this line (Villalba y Ruiz de Toledo 1996; Lecanda Esteban, Lorenzo Arribas, and Pastor Díaz de Garayo 2008). The border strongholds, subjected to repeated attacks and destructions, obviously needed some alert system in the case of an Andalusi army approaching, and the implementation of a surveillance service (see below) points in the same direction. Hitherto, an articulated system of watchtowers has been suggested only for the border's western cluster, in the vicinity of Roa, Aza, and San Martín de Rubiales, on the basis of the survey of a number of points apparently aiming to visual coverage of the valleys approaching the Duero line from the south (Reyes Téllez and Menéndez Robles 1987) and on the excavation of one such site: the tower at Valdezate (Burgos). The Valdezate tower is difficult to interpret not only because of the site's inherent problems but also for its lacking any comparable counterpart in the region so far. It is placed on top of the plain uplands south of the Duero, about 180 m above the valley bottom, in a position that keeps perfect visual contact with the main fortress at San Martín de Rubiales and controls the narrow valley of the river Corcos, the obvious approach from the south (Figure 13.3). The two-storeyed stone building erected there was enough to house a small gar-
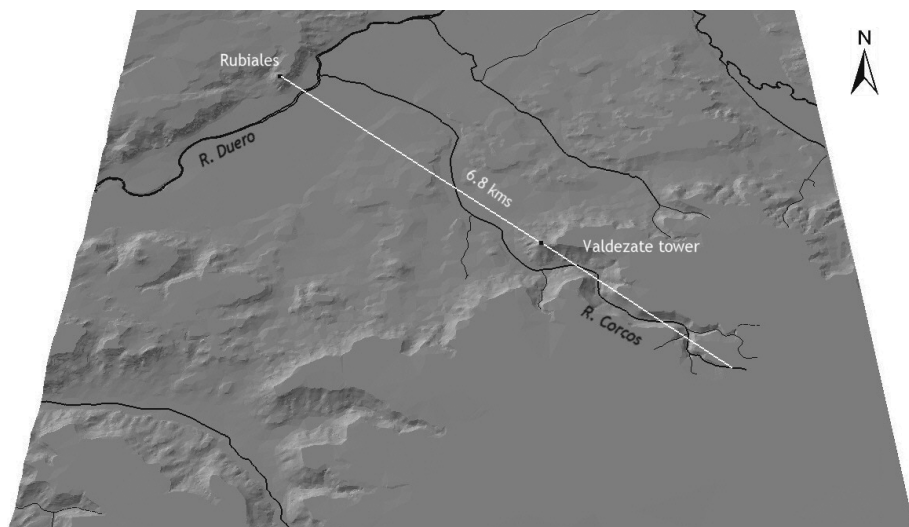
Figure 13.3. Location of the Valdezate tower in relation to the nearest central place (Rubiales) and to the control of the main approach route from the south-east. Map by J. Escalona.

rison of up to a dozen men, but the site lacked any walled enclosures — with the possible exception of a palisade — where the local population could take refuge (for details see Reyes Téllez 2000: I, 348–52). It was clearly not meant to resist attack but to provide early alert to the Rubiales fortress. This seems to be exactly what happened in its final phase. The building was deserted in haste by its garrison, who took all portable valuables with themselves, but abandoned more burdensome commodities before the tower was destroyed and set ablaze with no signs of resistance (for the possible historical contexts of this destruction, see Reyes Téllez 1997). The greatest problem of the Valdezate tower is its chronology. Only one occupation phase was recorded, and the abundant, coherent material culture recovered also suggests that the site was not in use for a very long period. The pottery is in tune with survey and excavation findings at other sites nearby, and it could well fit a tenth-century date, but our knowledge of eighth- to eleventh-century ceramics in this region (Menéndez Robles 1991; Larrén Izquierdo and others 2004) does not yet allow anything but the coarsest of dating (tenth to eleventh century, for example). On the other hand, recent attempts to obtain radiocarbon dates for this site (unpublished) have proved inconclusive. An occupation date within the first third of the tenth century remains likely but must be treated as conjectural until more solid data are obtained. If hypothetically accepted, the Valdezate tower would be the

only example yet of how the second level of defence was implemented in the Castilian Duero border. The tower clearly could not serve as refuge for locals: its main visual advantage was to provide control for the Rubiales fortress, a function easily fulfilled by a small group of men working in shifts, especially in the summer season when Muslim raids usually took place; it could not, and did not, resist a serious attack. The question whether Valdezate is archetypical could be investigated by further reconnaissance along the southern side of the Duero Valley in search of similar watchtowers. This of course, does not exclude the existence of other minor, unfortified alert points, like beacons, whose existence is difficult to demonstrate archaeologically.

Territorial Control and Military Obligations

Sites like Osma, Clunia, or Roa were more than just the upper layer of fortifications in the region. Most of them were the centres of the districts (*alfoces*) into which the county was divided, although we cannot ascertain how swiftly this administrative network was established (Álvarez Borge 1993: 201–09; Escalona 1997). In most cases the existing territorial communities probably provided the basic layout, so district centres may somehow reflect the region's organization before 912, but this is not always the case, as sometimes large districts were created that engulfed several earlier units. The best example is Clunia, whose huge *alfoz* certainly absorbed — and to a great extent obliterated — other territories, but this seems to have happened not in this early phase but rather in the late tenth-century period of most intense military pressure on the Duero border (Escalona 2000–01). During the tenth and eleventh centuries, the documentary evidence yields an image of the twofold workings of *alfoz* centres: on the one hand, they were political and administrative centres, controlling a territory and its resident population, which at the time meant not so much tax-collecting as the exercise of justice and military leadership; on the other hand, *alfoz* centres were also the basis for the management of the Castilian rulers' increasingly extensive estates, so the revenues from whichever property they held within a given territory were collected at those sites. This neat image is largely late tenth- or early eleventh-century in date. The evidence is too patchy to describe the pace at which this system was established, but it seems that at least political jurisdiction (judicial and military), as well as the power to control community-managed elements of the local economy, were present from the very start, though probably more through negotiation than coercion.

Given the importance of warfare in the Duero frontier, the procedures of army raising and military obligations are especially relevant (see an over-

view in English in Halsall 2003: 84–85). There is no single text that describes them in detail, but they can be deduced from a number of individual allusions. Eleventh-century charters recording exemptions from such burdens are especially eloquent, but they may well project a late, more evolved situation, despite the early examples commented by Sánchez-Albornoz (Sánchez-Albornoz 1968: 382–87). It is generally accepted that the counts of Castile were entitled to military obligations performed by the county's free population, much like the *trinoda necessitas* of Anglo-Saxon England (Brooks 1971; Abels 1988). The most general obligation was called *fossatus* (in Latin) or *fonsado* (in Castilian), that is, participating in the count's army — or the king's, on the rare occasions in which he personally led the army in Castilian territory (Sánchez-Albornoz 1968: 396–401). *Fonsado* normally entailed participating in military operations anywhere they could take place, so it was not a local affair (the duty to participate in a locality's immediate response to attack was called *apellido*, and it seems to have been a smaller-scale affair). In time, as the frontier and its associated stresses moved south, *fonsado* became increasingly limited by local legal codes and ultimately converted into a tax called *fossataria/fonsadera*, which represented the duty to pay for exemption from actual participation in warfare (Estepa Díez 2006; Estepa Díez 2003: 238–45; Estepa Díez 1996). Since at least the eleventh century, non-noble participation in *fonsado* was organized in two levels: horse-riders (*equites*) and infantry (*pedones*), reflecting the twofold status division of Castilian local communities, but this neat division probably did not operate yet in the early period.

The second general military obligation was called *castellaria*, and it entailed providing the workforce for the building and maintenance of castles (Sánchez-Albornoz 1968: 402–03). We cannot be sure how this work render was organized in the early period, but the later evidence, spanning well into the later Middle Ages again in the form of a converted tax, indicates that it was based upon the territorial network: the inhabitants of each district were responsible for the maintenance of its castles. We know only one tenth-century case in which the population of an *alfoz* was exempted from *labore de illos castellos* by the count of Castile in 972 (Cardeña, no. 153: Martínez Díez 1998), which highlights the general character of the burden in this period (Sánchez-Albornoz 1968: 403).

The third general military obligation was called *anubda*, and it meant providing garrisons for surveillance (González de Fauve 1964; Sánchez-Albornoz 1968: 403–08). Twelfth-century local codes refer to this obligation as a job fit for commoners rather than knights, but in the tenth century this seems to have been a specific task of the frontier's local elites. In the early tenth century

anubda was arguably performed on a more decentralized basis, perhaps organized from each district's fortress.[5] However, as warfare on the frontier intensified, it started to work at a larger scale, especially in the late tenth century, when the performance of *anubda* was centralized in the two major fortresses of Peñafiel in the west and Carazo in the east, where the region's *infanzones* (petty knights) were summoned periodically, as described by the unusually colourful narrative of a *c.* 1030 document (Escalona 1987):

> Those *infanzones* of Espeja [a small area in the alfoz of Clunia] had the obligation to perform *anubda* in Gormaz, Osma and San Esteban. When those castles were taken by the Moors, Count Sancho ordered them to pay their *anubdas* in Carazo and Peñafiel, like all *infanzones* did.[6]

The creation of the frontier and the imposition of military obligations upon the population in the Duero border are both consequences of its incorporation to a large-scale political system, which also entailed other major changes, like the implementation of a superior judicial system, and the infiltration in the local scene of aristocratic landholding networks that had a great potential in the long run to modify existing socio-economic relationships. We can hardly doubt that, in general terms, the result was a huge increase in the burdens that the region's peasant population had to endure. At this stage, state taxation does not seem to have played a significant role. Instead, work renders — whether agricultural or military — seem to have been the main expression of submission to the count's power, together with the acceptance of his judicial authority. Given the special strategic situation of the Duero borders, it seems reasonable that military obligations played a more influential role in this region than in the areas north of the river Arlanzón where military stress was occasional. Nevertheless, there is no evidence of local resistance as the new burdens were established,[7] which is remarkable, since in the early tenth century the Castilian counts largely lacked the resources to enforce their exigencies in every locality

---

[5] If an early tenth-century date is confirmed for the aforecited Valdezate watchtower, this could be a good setting for *anubda*, in connection with the fortress at San Martín de Rubiales (Figure 13.3).

[6] San Juan de la Peña, no. 54: 'Ipsos infanciones de Spelia abuerunt fuero per anutba tenere in Gormaz et in Oxima et in Sancti Stefani; quando prenderunt ipsas kasas maurus, mandavit domno Sancio comite que tenuissent ipsas anutbas in Karazo et in Pennafidele, quomodo totos infanciones faciebant.'

[7] The many acts of opposition to the Count recorded in the aforecited document of *c.* 1030 (San Juan de la Peña, no. 54) belong to 995–1017 and respond to a different rationale.

across the huge Duero territory. This could only be done with inside coopera-
tion, in which the region's elites were essential, as they had the power to mobi-
lize their communities to meet their new ruler's needs.

Castle-building, of course, was a major burden, both in material costs and
manpower, but its weight was probably quite irregular. If the case of Castrojeriz
can be taken as an example, erecting the main walls and ramparts (or renewing
whatever existing structures there were) must have meant a major effort in a
very short time (perhaps one season) to make sure it could immediately resist
attack. Further conditioning would arguably span several years, and mainte-
nance work would be needed periodically, but these would be much lighter
obligations for the population unless the site was taken and destroyed (as hap-
pened not infrequently) and needed reconstruction. In any case, there must
have been an initial period in which the region's population suddenly became
involved in castle making with great intensity, which must have been greatly
disruptive for their yearly work cycles. In the absence of large-scale compul-
sive mechanisms, we must not underestimate the role of bottom-up agency in
this process. Burdensome as it was, castle-building — like many other defence-
related obligations — was highly symbolic, quite different from other kinds of
collective work renders, especially in a newly incorporated region. Together
with the fear of a potential military threat, it surely had the power to excite
people's feelings of belonging to a collective body with which they could iden-
tify, so we must allow for some degree of enthusiasm that could well fade out
after the initial impulse. This factor may have played its part in other processes
of sudden intensification of warfare and castle construction, as in King Alfred's
Wessex in the late ninth century.

The strongest motivation, to be sure, was that of the region's elites, whose
leading local position allowed them to redirect community efforts to meet
those goals. When the Castilian army was summoned to *fonsado*, it was the
local elites that had to help the count's officer in organizing the levy before
joining the army. This often meant gathering a large party of fighting men and
bringing them to whichever part of the county was under threat to counteract
Muslim raids, as in the 939 campaign against Simancas, described by the *First
Castilian Annals* and Ibn Hayyan.[8] Arabic sources are more explicit than Latin
ones on Castilian offensive raids southwards, which were usually small-scale
looting operations, although they could occasionally scale up and proceed well

---

[8] *Anales Castellanos 1*, s.a. 939 (Gómez Moreno 1915); Al-Muqtabis, v: 293–303 (Ibn
Hayyan 1981).

into the caliphate's territory (Sánchez-Albornoz 1968: 417–18). Taking part in such raids was an occasion for displaying military abilities and, of course, sharing in the booty. Likewise, carrying out surveillance (*anubda*) became a specific task for the local elites, which reinforced their leading military role before their communities. For those elites, investing in the new order meant a landscape of opportunity.

The military situation of the Duero region and the whole organization of warfare could have the effect of reinforcing the division of labour within local communities, by ascribing to their elites specialized tasks that in the long run could make them relatively richer, and generate mechanisms of more intense surplus extraction from the community to provide for the new needs. This would not turn all local leaders — who probably were no more than relatively rich farmers — into non-cultivators overnight, but it could put them in a comparatively better position to seek higher social horizons by marking themselves out from their fellow men, replicating aristocratic life-styles and trying to enter the Count's or some aristocrat's service. It is not possible to follow all of these threads here, so in the last section of this essay discussion will focus on one such possibility: the erection of local towers.

Tower-Building and Social Mobility: The Ghost Towers of Early Castile

The defence system of the Castilian County's southern border consisted, as described above, of two main types of fortresses: major strongholds and watchtowers. There was, however, probably a third layer of defended sites which were not part of the overall defence system, but of more local significance. Evidence for such local fortresses — whether sought in place-names, charters, or archaeology — is extremely elusive, but worth pursuing.

A layer of village names in medieval Castile include terms indicating fortifications, like *turris*, *castrum*, *castrellum*, or — less frequently — *castellum*. Such names are sometimes preserved in modern place-names, such as Castrojeriz (< *Castrum Sigerici*), while others are known from references in charters to currently deserted settlements (see the place-name index in Martínez Díez 1987: 403–24). Such place-names are always a minority, about 3.2 per cent of the 1737 settlements recorded in Martínez Díez's survey (which is limited to the modern province of Burgos). Of this small group, however, 40 per cent of place-names share a common structure: 'fortification term' + personal name, for instance: Tornadijo (Torre de Atilio) or Tordómar (Torre de Agómar). The 'fortification term' may be *castrum* — usually in its diminutive form *castrel-*

lum — (nine cases) or, more often, *torre* and its diminutive *torrecilla* (four-teen cases). In general, both groups concentrate in the south of the county, but the 'torre' + name group is consistently southerly: all cases occur south of the Arlanzón. Many of these names were probably in use in the tenth century; although, given the nature of the textual evidence, we cannot be sure that this is always the case. For example, the now deserted village called Torre de Doña Imblo, in the *alfoz* of Belbimbre, is first recorded in 1175 (Martínez Díez 1987: 297), too late to argue that the place-name dates back to the tenth century. By contrast, other cases are clearer. The best recorded is Torresandino, on the river Esgueva, discussed in detail by Vázquez Álvarez (Vázquez Álvarez 1999: 362–63). This place is cited in a 948 charter as a reference to locate a donated church: 'aecclesia Sancti Petri et Pauli qui est sita in Augseba, iuxta Torre quem ferunt Domno Sindino' (Cardeña, no. 61). Two other charters of 950 and 958 record a man called Alfonso Sendínez (that is Alfonso, son of Sendino) holding property in nearby Tubilla (Cardeña, nos 74 and 93). The evidence gathered by Vázquez Álvarez makes clear that Alfonso Sendínez was of non-peasant status, arguably a nobleman, though hardly of the highest kind. If his connection with the place-name is correct, as it seems, this points to another high-status charac-ter called Sendino (*dominus Sendinus*) who gave his name to a tower sometime in the first third of the tenth century (Alfonso Sendínez was already married in 950), and whose son could lead a life with the material marks of a petty aristocrat. A similar case is a place cited in 952 as *Castrello de Munio Romaniz* (Cardeña, no. 82), which can be associated with Romani Munioz, an aristocrat of the following generation recorded in 963, this time with clearly higher fam-ily connections (Cardeña, no. 110; Álvarez Borge 1996: 29–30).

With a few exceptions, most of the persons mentioned in these kinds of place-name are utterly obscure. Their names cannot be related to families of an aristocratic character. Moreover, instances bearing status marks like *domnus*, or the mention of a double name (personal + patronimic) are a minority. Especially in 'tower' place-names, the persons involved seem to be ordinary locals (Torre de Apre, Torre de Moronta, Torre de Feles) and not infrequently they have Arabic names (Torre de Agomar, Torre de Abolabaza, Torre de Abolmondar, Torre de Chave), which is a standard feature of personal names among the pop-ulation of the Duero area but much less usual among the Castilian aristocracy. Especially interesting is the abovementioned document of *c.* 1030 (San Juan de la Peña, no. 54) which, referring to events of the late tenth century, men-tions three villages called Torre de Guisando, Torre de Abolabaza, and Torre de Abolmondar. All of these villages seem to have been controlled by the local elites (which the document calls *infanzones*). By contrast, a fourth settlement

which was wholly controlled by the count of Castile was called Torreciella, with no further qualifications.

Of course, the number of place-names that fit this model is very low. However, a similar structure occurs with other prefixes, chiefly 'villa', for instance: Villasur (Villa Assur), Villazate (Villa de Zate), or Villovela (Villa Vela). It seems that naming a settlement by reference to a local leading person was frequent practice, and we cannot be sure that only when the prefix was 'Turris' or 'Castrello' did such persons possess a fortified place. In fact, even when the settlement's name does not refer to a tower, the microtoponymy can help identify the existence of such sites in many Castilian villages which — by one reason or another — did not become a part of the main settlement's name but are preserved as named landscape features. These have sometimes been the subject of surface recognition and study. Together with proto-historic hill-forts and later medieval castles and towers, there seems to exist a layer of sites of strictly local relevance, which — especially in northern Castile — tend to be interpreted as long-established community structures, the nodes of small territorial units comprising a few lowland hamlets (Martín Viso 2000; Martín Viso 2006). However, the southern sites of the kind I have discussed are better understood as erected by members of the local elite in an attempt to intensify control over their communities and to present themselves as fit for higher social recognition. With few exceptions, most must have been obscure people who never made it into the aristocracy. Neither their memory nor their towers have been preserved.

Conclusions

Our knowledge of the defensive structures of tenth-century Castile awaits much further work, especially from archaeology. We know too little about the county's main fortresses and their relationship to settlement hierarchy networks that were emerging in that period. Likewise, we can still only hypothesize the existence of a system of dependent watchtowers, arguably manned by local communities according to the system of military obligations described above. Finally, there has not yet been an interest in detecting and defining the physical character of sites like the 'turres', which could work as pointers to an intensification of status differences following the region's incorporation to the Asturian kingdom. However, we can — and must — keep constructing models that try to bring together the patchy evidence at hand and envisage new orientations for future fieldwork. Such models must be subtle enough to explain the

intricacies of social and political transformations in a period in which a formidable leap in territorial scale and social complexity took place on a very limited temporal scale. These kinds of transformations are bound to trigger conscious reactions by social actors. Top-down and bottom-up agency must be combined to conceptualize the social change that underlaid the construction of the defensive buildings considered in this essay, which were not just royal and/or comital impositions but the result of a complex interaction between different actors seeking their place in a swiftly changing social landscape.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Gil Fernandez, Juan, José Luis Moralejo, and Juan Ignacio Ruiz de la Peña (eds). 1985. *Crónicas Asturianas* (Oviedo)
Gómez Moreno, Manuel. 1915. *Anales Castellanos* (Madrid)
Ibn Hayyan, Abu Marwan Hayyan ibn Khalaf. 1981. *Al-Muqtabis, V*, in *Crónica del Califa 'Abdarrahman III an-Nasir entre los años 912 y 942 (al-Muqtabis V)*, ed. by María Jesús Viguera and Federico Corriente (Zaragoza)

Secondary Studies

Abásolo Álvarez, José Antonio, and José Ignacio Ruiz Vélez. 1976. 'El yacimiento arqueológico de Castrogeriz. avance al estudio de las cerámicas indígenas', *Sautuola*, 2, 263–80
Abásolo Álvarez, José Antonio, José Ignacio Ruiz Vélez, and Fernando Pérez. 1983. 'Castrogeriz I: el vertedero de la Colegiata', *Noticiario Arqueológico Hispánico*, 17, 191–318
Abels, Richard P. 1988. *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley)
Almagro, Antonio. 2008. 'La puerta califal del castillo de Gormaz', *Arqueología de la Arquitectura*, 5, 55–77
Álvarez Borge, Ignacio. 1987. 'El proceso de transformación de las comunidades de aldea: una aproximación al estudio de la formación del feudalismo en Castilla (siglos X y XI)', *Studia Historica: Historia Medieval*, 5, 145–60
——, 1993. *Monarquía feudal y organización territorial: Alfoces y merindades en Castilla (siglos X–XIV)* (Madrid)
——, 1996. *Poder y relaciones sociales en Castilla en la Edad Media: Los territorios entre el Arlanzón y el Duero en los siglos X al XIV* (Salamanca)
Arce, Javier. 2005. *Bárbaros y romanos en Hispania, 400–507 AD* (Madrid)
Bohigas Roldán, R., and José Ángel Lecanda Esteban. 2000. 'Tedeja y el control político del territorio del norte burgalés en época tardorromana, visigoda, alto y plenomedieval', in *V Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española*, 2 vols (Valladolid), I, 49–56

Brooks, Nicholas P. 1971. 'The Development of Military Obligations in Eighth- and Ninth-Century England', in *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge), pp. 69–84

Carr, Karen Eva. 2002. *Vandals to Visigoths: Rural Settlement Patterns in Early Medieval Spain* (Ann Arbor)

Castellanos, Santiago, and Iñaki Martín Viso. 2005. 'The Local Articulation of Central Power in the North of the Iberian Peninsula (500–1000)', *Early Medieval Europe*, 13, 1–42

Cepas Palanca, Adela. 2006. 'The Ending of the Roman City: The Case of Clunia in the Northern Plateau', in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, ed. by Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 15 (Turnhout), pp. 187–207

Chavarría Arnau, Alexandra. 2007. *El final de las villae en Hispania (siglos IV–VII d. C.)*, Bibliothèque de l'Antiquité Tardive, 7 (Turnhout)

De la Iglesia Duarte, José Ignacio (ed.). 2002. *Conflictos sociales, políticos e intelectuales en la España de los siglos XIV y XV*, Semanas de Estudios Medievales de Nájera, 12 (Logroño)

Díez Herrera, Carmen. 1999. 'La organización social del espacio entre la cordillera cantábrica y el Duero en los siglos VIII al XI: una propuesta de análisis como sociedad de frontera', in *Del Cantábrico al Duero. trece estudios sobre la organización social del espacio en los s. VIII a XIII*, ed. by José Ángel García de Cortázar y Ruiz de Aguirre (Santander), pp. 125–55

Escalona, Julio. 1987. 'Las prestaciones de servicios militares y la organización de la sociedad feudal castellana: los infanzones de Espeja', *Castillos de España*, 94, 55–60

——, 1997. 'Acerca de la territorialidad en la Castilla altomedieval: tres casos significativos', in *Historia social, pensamiento historiográfico y Edad Media: Homenaje al Prof. Abilio Barbero de Aguilera*, ed. by María Isabel Loring García (Madrid), pp. 217–44

——, 2000–01. 'Comunidades, territorios y poder condal en la Castilla del Duero en el siglo X', *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval*, 18–19, 85–120

——, 2002. *Sociedad y territorio en la Alta Edad Media castellana: la formación del alfoz de Lara*, British Archaeological Reports, International Series 1079 (Oxford)

——, 2004. 'Family Memories: Inventing Alfonso I of Asturias', in *Building Legitimacy: Political Discourse and Forms of Legitimation in Medieval Societies*, ed. by Isabel Alfonso, Hugh Kennedy, and Julio Escalona (Leiden), pp. 223–62

——, 2006. 'Patrones de fragmentación territorial: el fin del mundo romano en la Meseta del Duero', in *Comunidades locales y dinámicas de poder en el norte de la Península Ibérica durante la Antigüedad Tardía*, ed. by Urbano Espinosa and Santiago Castellanos García (Logroño), pp. 165–200

Escalona, Julio, and Francisco Reyes Téllez. 2011. 'Scale Change on the Border: The County of Castile in the Tenth Century', in *Scale and Scale Change in the Early Middle Ages: Exploring Landscape, Local Society and the World Beyond*, ed. by Julio Escalona and Andrew Reynolds, The Medieval Countryside, 6 (Turnhout), pp. 153–183

Escribano Velasco, Consuelo, and Arturo Balado Pachón. 2000. 'Una singular ocupación altomedieval al sur del Duero: los husun de Íscar y Portillo', *v Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española*, 2 vols (Valladolid), I, 69–76

Escribano Velasco, Consuelo, Arturo Balado Pachón, and C. Pascual. 2000. 'Análisis del macrorelieve en arqueología medieval: las fortificaciones del Arlanzón, Pisuerga y Duero, de Burgos Simancas', *v Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española*, 2 vols (Valladolid), II, 775–90

Estepa Díez, Carlos. 1984. 'El alfoz castellano en los siglos IX al XII', *En la España Medieval (Estudios dedicados al profesor d. Angel Ferrari Núñez, 1)*, 4, 305–42

——, 1989. 'Formación y consolidación del feudalismo en Castilla y León', in *En torno al feudalismo hispánico. I Congreso de Estudios Medievales* (León), pp. 157–256

——, 1992. 'Configuración y primera expansión del reino astur. siglos VIII y IX', in *De Constantino a Carlomagno: disidentes, heterodoxos, marginados*, ed. by Francisco José Lomas and Federico Devis (Cádiz), pp. 179–95

——, 1996. 'Organización territorial, poder regio y tributaciones militares en la Castilla Plenomedieval', *Brocar*, 20, 135–76

——, 2002. 'El poder regio y los territorios', in *La época de la monarquía asturiana* (Oviedo), pp. 451–67

——, 2003. *Las behetrías castellanas*, 2 vols (Valladolid)

——, 2006. 'Fiscalidad de origen militar y concejos de realengo en la Castilla del Becerro de las Behetrías, dos ejemplos: los pagos al castillo de Burgos y la fonsadera naval', in *Fiscalidad de Estado y fiscalidad municipal en los reinos hispánicos medievales*, ed. by Denis Menjot and Manuel Sánchez Martínez (Madrid), pp. 3–20

Fernández Conde, Francisco Javier. 1997. 'Relaciones politicas y culturales de Alfonso II el Casto', in *Historia social, pensamiento historiográfico y Edad Media: homenaje al Prof. Abilio Barbero de Aguilera*, ed. by María Isabel Loring García (Madrid), pp. 597–611

Fernández Conde, Francisco Javier, María Jesús Suárez, and José Avelino Gutiérrez. 1997. 'A transición en Asturias. aproximación historiográfica e percepción do territorio astur na Alta Idade Media', in *Galicia fai dous mil anos o feito diferencial galego*, ed.by María Xosé Fernández Cerviño and Gerardo Pereira Menaut (Santiago de Compostela), pp. 391–412

García de Cortázar y Ruiz de Aguirre, José Ángel. 1997. 'El espacio cántabro-castellano y alavés en la época de Alfonso II el Casto', *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 74, 101–20

García Merino, Maria Carmen. 1973. 'La evolución del poblamiento de Gormaz (Soria) de la Edad del Hierro a la Edad Media', *Boletín del Seminario de Arte y Arqueología*, 39, 31–81

Gaya Nuño, José Antonio. 1943. 'Gormaz, castillo califal', *Al- Andalus*, 8, 431–50

González de Fauve, María Estela. 1964. 'La anubda y la arrobda en Castilla', *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 39–40, 5–42

Gonzalo González, José María. 2007. *El Cerro del Castillo, Bernardos (Segovia): Un yacimiento arqueológico singular en la provincia de Segovia durante la Antigüedad Tardía* (Segovia)

Gutiérrez González, José Avelino. 1995. *Fortificaciones y feudalismo en el origen y formación del Reino Leonés (siglos IX–XIII)* (Valladolid)

——, 2000. 'Dominio político y territorio en la formación del feudalismo en el norte peninsular. propuestas y reflexiones', in *V Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española*, 2 vols (Valladolid), II, 629–55

Halsall, Guy. 2003. *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450–900* (London)

Isla Frez, Amancio. 2000. 'Warfare and Other Plagues in the Iberian Peninsula around the Year 1000', in *Europe Around the Year 1000*, ed. by Przemyslaw Urbanczyk (Warsaw), pp. 233–46

Larrén Izquierdo, Hortensia, and others. 2004. 'Ensayo de sistematización de la cerámica tardoantigua en la Cuenca del Duero', in *Cerámicas tardorromanas y altomedievales en la Península Ibérica: ruptura y continuidad (II Simposio de Arqueología, Mérida 2001)*, ed. by Luis Caballero Zoreda, Pedro Mateos Cruz, and Manuel Retuerce Velasco (Madrid), pp. 273–306

Lecanda Esteban, José Ángel, Josemi Lorenzo Arribas, and Ernesto Pastor Díaz de Garayo. 2008. 'Faros y torres circulares: propuestas para el conocimiento de la efectividad del dominio islámico inicial en los territorios del alto Ebro', in *Fars de l'Islam: antigues alimares d'al-Andalus*, ed. by Ramon Martí Castelló (Barcelona), pp. 239–86

Loring García, María Isabel. 2005. 'La expansión de la servidumbre en el reino de Navarra a mediados del siglo XI: el ejemplo de Terrero', *En la España Medieval*, 12, 45–62

Lucas de Viñas, María Rosario. 1971. 'Hallazgos medievales en las laderas del castillo de Peñafiel (Valladolid)', *Noticiario Arqueológico Hispánico*, 16, 426–54

Manzano Moreno, Eduardo. 1991. *La frontera de al-Andalus en época de los Omeyas* (Madrid)

Martí Castelló, Ramon (ed.). 2008. *Fars de l'Islam: antigues alimares d'al-Andalus* (Barcelona)

Martínez Díez, Gonzalo. 1987. *Pueblos y alfoces burgaleses de la Repoblación* (Valladolid)

——, 1998. *Colección documental del monasterio de San Pedro de Cardeña* (Burgos)

——, 2004. *El Condado de Castilla (711–1038): la Historia frente a la leyenda*, 2 vols (Valladolid)

——, 2007. 'Servidumbre, ingenuidad y privilegio: notas a la condición jurídica de las personas en el Reino de León, 910–1157', *Monarquía y Sociedad en el Reino de León. de Alfonso III a Alfonso VII*, ed. by José María Fernández Catón, Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa, 117.1 (León), pp. 573–674

Martín Viso, Iñaki. 1999. 'Organización episcopal y poder entre la Antigüedad Tardía y el Medioevo (siglos V–XI): las diócesis de Calahorra, Oca y Osma', *Iberia: Revista de la Antigüedad*, 2, 151–90

——, 2000. *Poblamiento y estructuras sociales en el norte de la Península Ibérica, siglos VI–XIII* (Salamanca)

——, 2002. 'Poder político y estructura social en la Castilla altomedieval: el condado de Lantarón (siglos VIII–XI)', in *Los espacios de poder en la España medieval*, ed. by José Ignacio De la Iglesia Duarte, Semanas de Estudios Medievales de Nájera, 12 (Logroño), pp. 533–52

——, 2006. 'Central Places and the Territorial Organization of Communities: The Occupation of Hilltop Sites in Early Medieval Northern Castile', in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, ed. by Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds (Turnhout), pp. 187–208

——, 2008. 'Tremisses y potentes en el nordeste de Lusitania (siglos VI–VII)', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, n.s., 38.1, 175–200

Menéndez Robles, María Luisa. 1991. 'Cerámicas altomedievales en el Valle del Duero: el ejemplo burgalés', in *Burgos en la Alta Edad Media: II Jornadas Burgalesas de Historia* (Burgos), pp. 457–88

Pastor Díaz de Garayo, Ernesto. 1996. *Castilla en el tránsito de la Antigüedad al feudalismo: poblamiento, poder político y estructura social del Arlanza al Duero (siglos VII–XI)* (Valladolid)

Pérez de Úrbel, Fray Justo. 1951. 'Reconquista y repoblación de Castilla y León durante los siglos IX y X', in *La reconquista española y la repoblación del país* (Zaragoza), pp. 127–62

Quirós Castillo, Juan Antonio. 2011. 'L'eccezione che conferma la regola? Incastellamento nella valle dell'Ebro nel X secolo: il castello di Treviño', *Archeologia Medievale*, 38, 113–116

Quirós Castillo, Juan Antonio, and Alfonso Vigil-Escalera Guirado. 2006. 'Networks of Peasant Villages between Toledo and Velegia Alabense, Northwestern Spain (V–Xth centuries)', *Archeologia Medievale*, 33, 79–128

Reyes Téllez, Francisco. 1997. 'El alfoz de Rubiales en los siglos X al XII: un ejemplo de organización del territorio castellano a orillas del Duero', in *Historia social, pensamiento historiográfico y Edad Media: homenaje al Prof. Abilio Barbero de Aguilera*, ed. by María Isabel Loring García (Madrid), pp. 245–72

——, 2000. *Población y sociedad en el Valle del Duero, Duratón y Riaza en la Alta Edad Media, siglos VI–XI: aspectos arqueológicos*, E-Prints Complutense (Madrid) (CD-ROM)

Reyes Téllez, Francisco, and María Luisa Menéndez Robles. 1987. 'Sistemas defensivos altomedievales en las comarcas del Duratón-Riaza (siglos VIII–X)', in *II Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española*, 3 vols (Madrid), II, 631–39

Sánchez-Albornoz, Claudio. 1950. 'Alfonso III y el particularismo castellano', *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 13, 19–100

——, 1968. 'El ejército y la guerra en el reino astur-leonés, 718–1037', in *Ordinamenti militari in Occidente nell'Alto Medioevo*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 15.1 (Spoleto), pp. 293–428

Ubieto Arteta, Antonio. 1962. *Cartulario de San Juan de la Peña*, 2 vols (Valencia)

Uribarri Angulo, José L., Jesús M. Martínez González, and Isabel Leis Muñoz. 1987. *Primeros asentamientos humanos en la ciudad de Burgos I: el yacimientos del castillo y cerro de San Miguel* (Burgos)

Vázquez Álvarez, Roberto. 1999. 'Castros, castillos y torres en la organización social del espacio en Castilla: el espacio del Arlanza al Duero (siglos IX al XIII)', in *Del Cantábrico al Duero. trece estudios sobre la organización social del espacio en los s. VIII a XIII*, ed. by José Ángel García de Cortázar y Ruiz de Aguirre (Santander), pp. 351–73

Vigil-Escalera Guirado, Alfonso. 2006. 'El modelo de poblamiento rural en la Meseta y algunas cuestiones de visibilidad arqueológica', in *Gallia e Hispania en el contexto de la presencia 'germánica' (ss. V–VII): balances y perspectivas*, ed. by Jorge López Quiroga, Artemio Manuel Martínez Tejera, and Jorge Morín de Pablos, British Archaeological Reports, International Series 1534 (Oxford), pp. 89–108

Villalba y Ruiz de Toledo, Francisco Javier. 1996. 'La línea fronteriza castellana en los primeros compases de ocupación territorial', *Boletín de la Institución Fernán González*, 212, 169–84

Wickham, Chris. 2005. *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (Oxford)

Zozaya Stabel-Hansen, Juan. 1984. 'El proceso de islamización en la provincia de Soria', in *Actas del I Symposium de Arqueologia Soriana* (Soria), pp. 481–96

——, 2008. 'La trama defensiva del Valle del Duero', in *Fars de l'Islam: antigues alimares d'al-Andalus*, ed. by Ramon Martí Castelló (Barcelona), pp. 89–124

Index

Studies in the Early Middle Ages

All volumes in this series are evaluated by an Editorial Board, strictly on academic grounds, based on reports prepared by referees who have been commissioned by virtue of their specialism in the appropriate field. The Board ensures that the screening is done independently and without conflicts of interest. The definitive texts supplied by authors are also subject to review by the Board before being approved for publication. Further, the volumes are copyedited to conform to the publisher's stylebook and to the best international academic standards in the field.

Titles in Series

Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards (2000)

On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages, ed. by Andrew Gillett (2002)

Matthew Townend, *Language and History in Viking Age England: Linguistic Relations between Speakers of Old Norse and Old English* (2002)

Contact, Continuity, and Collapse: The Norse Colonization of the North Atlantic, ed. by James H. Barrett (2003)

Court Culture in the Early Middle Ages: The Proceedings of the First Alcuin Conference, ed. by Catherine Cubitt (2003)

Political Assemblies in the Earlier Middle Ages, ed. by P. S. Barnwell and Marco Mostert (2003)

Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference, ed. by Matthew Townend (2004)

Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, ed. by Florin Curta (2006)

John D. Niles, *Old English Enigmatic Poems and the Play of the Texts* (2006)

Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe, 1000–1200, ed. by Sally N. Vaughn and Jay Rubenstein (2006)

Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West, ed. by Elizabeth M. Tyler and Ross Balzaretti (2006)

People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300, ed. by Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds (2006)

John D. Niles, *Old English Heroic Poems and the Social Life of Texts* (2007)

The Crisis of the Oikoumene*: The Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth- Century Mediterranean*, ed. by Celia Chazelle and Catherine Cubitt (2007)

Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Eamonn O Carragain, ed. by Alastair Minnis and Jane Roberts (2007)

The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation, ed. by Aaron J. Kleist (2007)

James T. Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690–900* (2009)

Challenging the Boundaries of Medieval History: The Legacy of Timothy Reuter, ed. by Patricia Skinner (2009)

Peter Verbist, *Duelling with the Past: Medieval Authors and the Problem of the Christian Era, c. 990–1135* (2010)

Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History, ed. by Alice Jorgensen (2010)

England and the Continent in the Tenth Century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876–1947), ed. by David Rollason, Conrad Leyser, and Hannah Williams (2010)

Early Medieval Northumbria: Kingdoms and Communities, AD 450–1100, ed. by David Petts and Sam Turner (2011)

Conceptualizing Multilingualism in Medieval England, c. 800–c. 1250, ed. by Elizabeth M. Tyler (2011)

Neglected Barbarians, ed. by Florin Curta (2011)

The Genesis of Books: Studies in the Scribal Culture of Medieval England in Honour of A. N. Doane, ed. by Matthew T. Hussey and John D. Niles (2012)

Giselle de Nie, *Poetics of Wonder: Testimonies of the New Christian Miracles in the Late Antique Latin World* (2012)

Lilla Kopár, *Gods and Settlers: The Iconography of Norse Mythology in Anglo-Scandinavian Sculpture* (2012)

R. W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time: The Latin Chronicle Traditions from the First Century BC to the Sixth Century AD, vol. I: A Historical Introduction to the Chronicle Genre from its Origins to the High Middle Ages* (2013)

Sacred Sites and Holy Places: Exploring the Sacralization of Landscape through Space and Time, ed. by Sæbjørg Walaker Nordeide and Stefan Brink (2013)

Christine Maddern, *Raising the Dead: Early Medieval Name Stones in Northumbria* (2013)

In Preparation

Sara M. Pons-Sanz, *The Lexical Effects of Anglo-Scandinavian Linguistic Contact on Old English*

Society and Culture in Medieval Rouen, 911–1300, ed. by Leonie V. Hicks and Elma Brenner

Shane McLeod, *The Beginning of Norse Settlement in England: The Viking 'Great Army' and Early Settlers, c. 865–900*